THE EIGHT RANKS METHOD

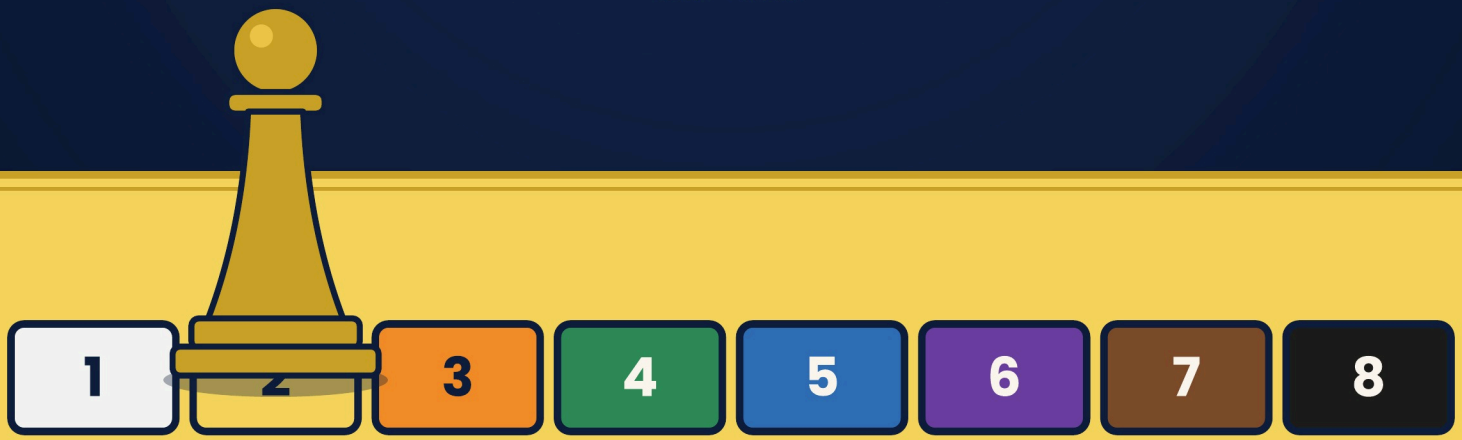
RANK 2 OF 8

YELLOW BELT

STUDENT BOOK

THE EIGHT RANKS METHOD™

Twelve weeks. Pins, skewers, mate in two. A second rank, earned.



BOOK 2 OF 8 · FOUNDATION 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™

Yellow Belt

Student Book

Foundation · Rank 2 of 8 · Book 2 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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Yellow Belt Student Book
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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

You earned White belt. You can set up the board, name the squares, castle, say the three ways out of check and run the Safety Check. Yellow belt makes those tools sharper: two special moves, two new tactics (the pin and the skewer), mate in two, the stalemate trap, the clock, the queen mate and the pawn race. Each chapter has exercises, with answers right after them; the answers to Review boxes, progress checks and the practice quiz are at the back. Diagrams show White at the bottom unless the caption says otherwise. "I can" lines tell you what Rank Day will ask.

This book takes twelve weeks. Spend two weeks on each chapter. In the first week, read the chapter and do the exercises on a real board. In the second week, do the lab for that chapter. Start each chapter with the Review box; it brings back ideas from before. At the end of each chapter, do the progress check. If the chapter felt hard, read the Help box. If it felt easy, read the Stretch box. Use the Game Lab pages for your own games: two games, three comments each. Show the family corner to an adult at home. Let them ask you the question there. Keep your labs and your Game Lab pages in your folder. Rank Day is in week 12. Bring this book, your folder and a pencil. If an adult reads with you, take turns. One reads, one sets up the board.

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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, 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	70, every one drawn from a verified position
Model games	1, a real game played through move by move with questions, plus Scholar's mate, a short classic pattern
Puzzle practice and endgame drills	42 positions, every one completely solved
Game Lab pages	2 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	60 chess words explained
Practice quiz	20 questions in the four Rank Day forms, with answers

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

The special moves and the first ten moves

By the end of this chapter you will be able to

- Castle on both sides and name the four times you may not.
- Capture en passant on the right move.
- Play the first ten moves of the Italian Game with a reason for each.

Launch This chapter ends with STEM Lab Y1.1: Mirror and Distance.

I can: castle on both sides and explain when castling is not allowed; capture en passant; play the first ten moves of the Italian Game with a reason for each.

1.1 Castling, and the four times you may not

Castling moves the king two squares toward a rook and jumps the rook to the square the king crossed. It is the only move that moves two pieces. Every square between the king and that rook must be empty. You may not castle if the king or that rook has already moved; if the king is in check; if the king would pass through a square that is attacked; or if the king would land on an attacked square. (A rook that is attacked, or a rook that passes an attacked square on the queenside, does not stop castling.)

1.2 En passant

When a pawn moves two squares and lands beside an enemy pawn, that enemy pawn may capture it as if it had moved one square, but only on the very next move. In Diagram 1.2 Black has just played d7-d5. White may play exd6, removing the d5 pawn.

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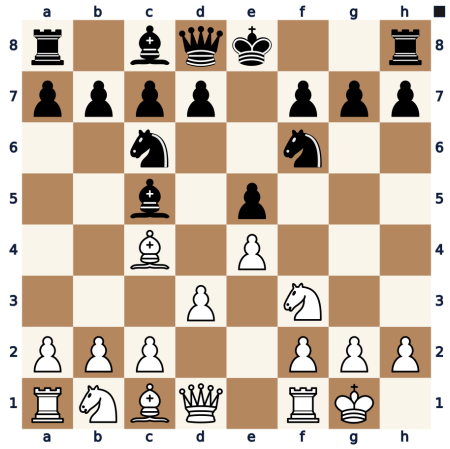


Diagram 1.1. The Italian Game after 4.O-O Nf6 5.d3. White has castled kingside; the king sits on g1, the rook on f1. Black to move: Black may castle now.



Diagram 1.2. Black played d7-d5. White to move: the e5 pawn may capture en passant, exd6.

1.3 Ten moves with reasons

The Italian Game is the opening the White book began. Memorize the moves with the reasons, not the moves alone: 1.e4 e5 (center) 2.Nf3 Nc6 (knights before bishops; attack and defend e5) 3.Bc4 Bc5 (bishops to active diagonals aimed at f7 and f2) 4.c3 Nf6 (White prepares d4; Black develops with a threat on e4) 5.d3 d6 (both sides defend their center pawn) 6.O-O O-O (kings to safety) 7.Bg5 (a pin on the knight) h6 (Black asks the bishop a question) 8.Bh4 (keeps the pin) a6 (makes a hole for the bishop on a7) 9.Nbd2 (the last minor piece comes out; c3 is taken by a pawn) Ba7 (keeps the bishop safe from d4 and b4) 10.Re1 (supports e4 and the push d3-d4). After ten moves both kings are castled, White has developed all four minor pieces and Black three, and the plan for White is d3-d4.

1.4 Exercises

1. In Diagram 1.1, Black wants to castle kingside. List the four things you check before saying “Black may castle.”
2. In Diagram 1.2, write the en passant capture in notation and say on which move it must happen.
3. From the start position, play the ten moves of 1.3 on a board, then write one sentence for move 8.

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LAUNCH

Answers (legal illustrations; answers by rule): 1. The king on e8 and the rook on h8 have not moved; the squares f8 and g8 between them are empty; the king is not in check; f8 and g8 are not attacked by White (Bc4 looks at f7, not f8 or g8). Black may castle. 2. exd6, and it must be played at once; if White plays any other move, the right is gone. 3. "8.Bh4 keeps the pin on the knight so Black cannot move it without losing the queen."

HELP · IF THIS FELT HARD

Read 1.1 again, then castle ten times on a real board, five on each side. Say one 'may not' rule each time you castle, and check that the squares between king and rook are empty. Slow and right is a fine way to start.

STRETCH · IF THIS FELT EASY

Play the ten moves of 1.3 from memory with a friend, then swap colors and do it again. Then set up Diagram 1.1 and list each square the bishop on c4 attacks. Say why it does not stop Black from castling.

LOOK INSIDE

PROGRESS CHECK · CHAPTER 1

1. Castling moves two pieces. Which two, and how?
2. Name the four times you may not castle.
3. In Diagram 1.2, Black just played d7-d5. What may White play, and when?
4. In your own words: why do we play Nf3 on move 2, before Bc4 on move 3?
5. Black has just played d7-d5 and your pawn is on c5. Write the en passant capture.

Answers are in the back of the book.

FAMILY CORNER · WHAT TO ASK YOUR LEARNER THIS WEEK

Can you show me how to castle, and tell me one time when the rules say you may not?

A good answer sounds like: Your learner moves the king two squares toward a rook and hops the rook over to the other side. Then they name one rule, such as 'not when my king is in check' or 'not if my king or that rook has already moved.'

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