

**LEVY ROZMAN**

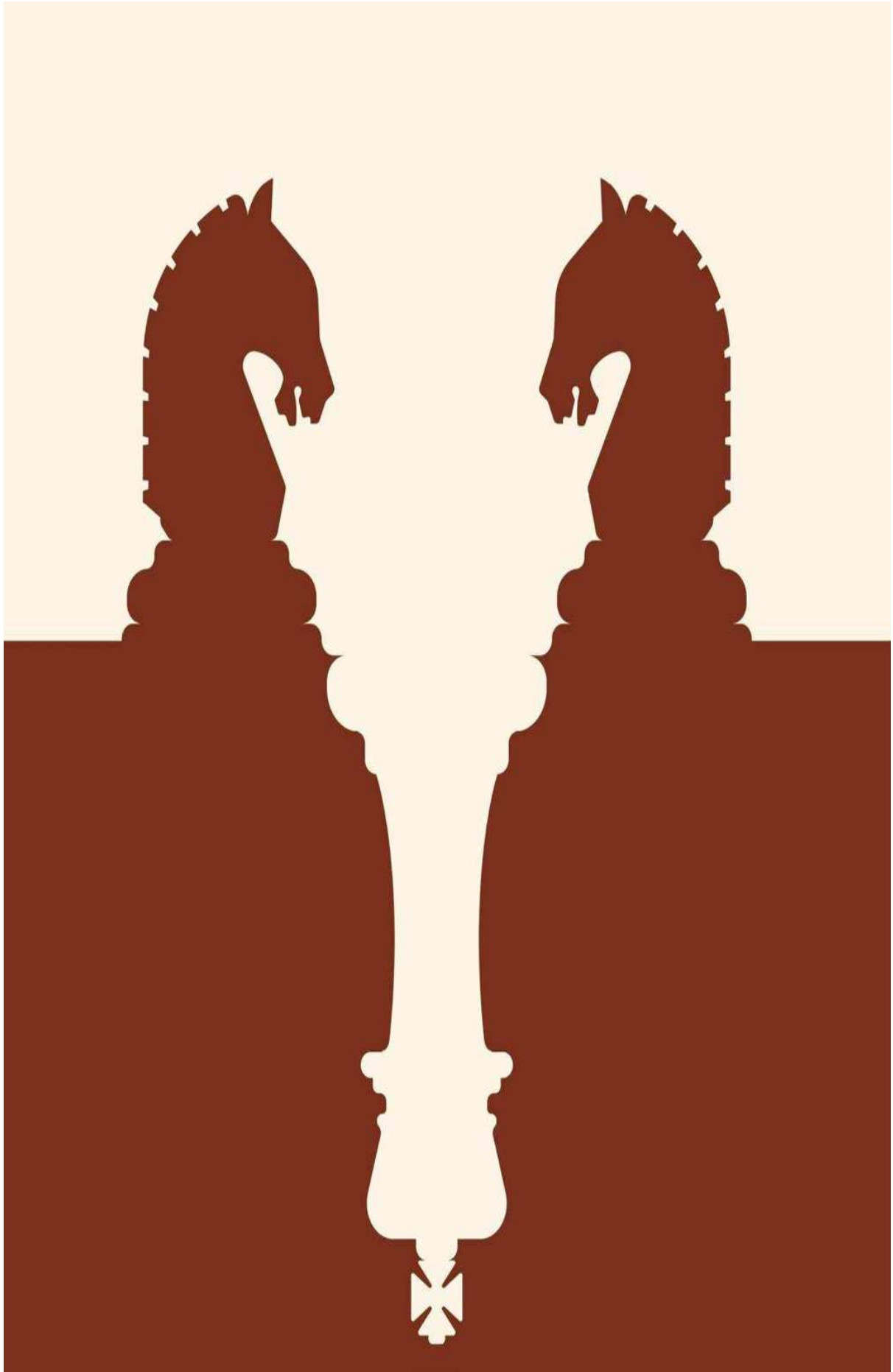
AKA  
**GOTHAMCHESS**

HOW TO WIN AT  
**CHESS**

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE FOR  
BEGINNERS AND BEYOND



THE  
#1 CHESS  
TEACHER ON  
YOUTUBE



HOW TO WIN AT  
**CHESS**

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE FOR  
BEGINNERS AND BEYOND

**LEVY ROZMAN**



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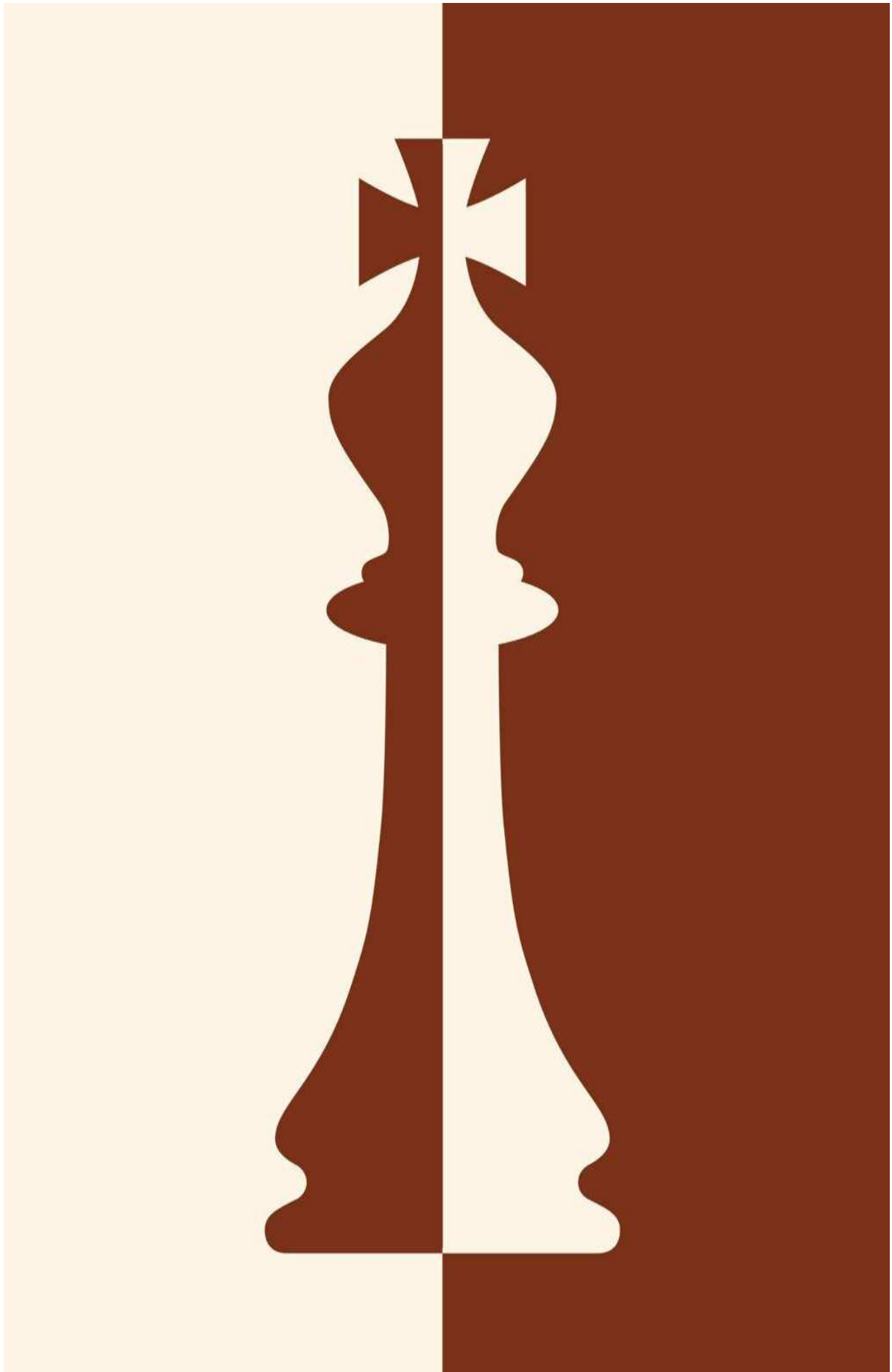
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# INTRODUCTION

Hello and welcome! My name is Levy. I'm an International Master, a former semi-professional player, and now I primarily teach chess online. Before we dive into the specifics of how to win at chess, I'd like to give you some background about myself, this book, and the basics of this incredible game.

Chess is a fascinating game, but our learning material can be quite intimidating. Throughout my years as a chess instructor, countless people have asked me, "What is a good first chess book to buy?" The truth is, nobody has a definitive answer! In my experience, beginner and intermediate chess books vary greatly in length and depth, and usually require having a physical chessboard on hand to follow along with the instructions. The search for a comprehensive, modern guide to chess was my inspiration for the book you currently hold in your hands. My goal was to write a refreshing, revitalized take on this timeless and beautifully complicated game.

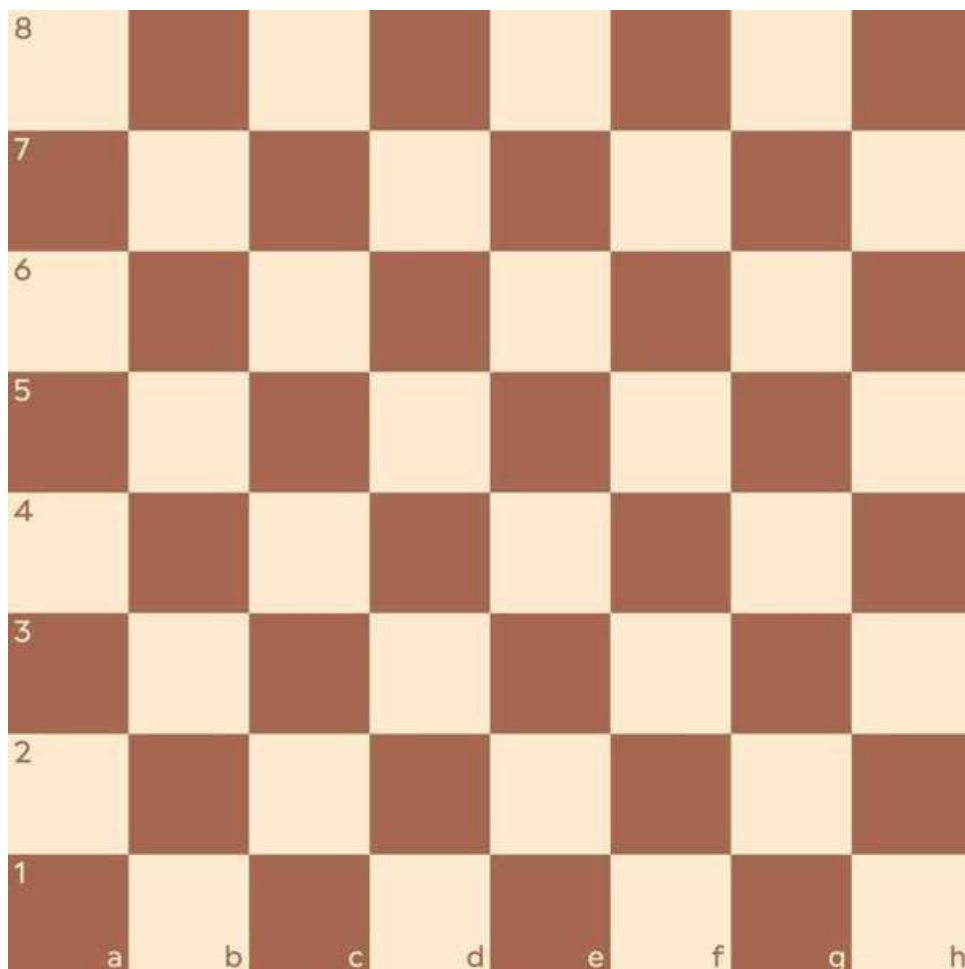
I've spent nearly my entire adult life teaching chess to others. Whether it was in kindergarten classes or corporate offices, I always searched for the most effective means of demystifying the 64 squares to my students. When the world shut down in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, I began teaching my students on Zoom, but forcing six-year-old kids to sit through private chess lessons online was both fruitless and mildly depressing, so I turned my focus to YouTube. In the years since then, I have made a video about chess nearly every day of my life.

Some of you might have found me on YouTube a few years back, and my videos became your reprieve during hard times. Others may have watched me back in 2018, as a disheveled mess livestreaming at 4 a.m. on Twitch. And the rest of you may not

have a clue about my online endeavors but are simply curious about learning chess—just know that I deeply appreciate all of you. I love making the game fun and accessible to everyone, which I hope will become clear to you in the chapters ahead. Over the next several pages, you will learn the fundamental rules of the game, to which you can refer back at any point in your learning and play as a refresher. Then the real lessons begin. Enjoy!

## The Basics of Chess

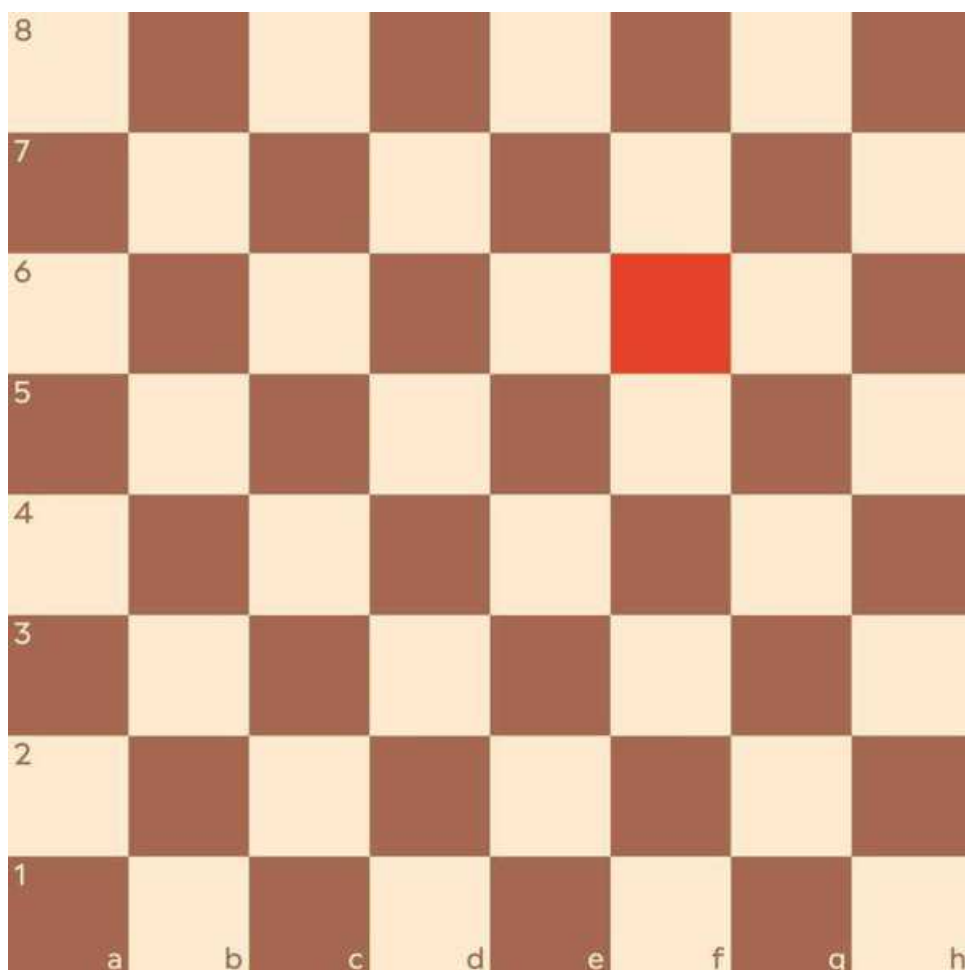
Chess is nearly 1,500 years old, and its origins can be traced back to sixth-century India. The game has gone through some changes since then but today, the board looks like this:





↑ A chessboard has 64 squares, laid out in a grid of 8 x 8. The squares alternate between light and dark. The bottom right-hand corner should be a light square for both players, whether you're playing with an actual board or online.

The board has coordinates, too. An online board will likely have the coordinates showing on the board (like the board above)—but most real boards don't. Think of the coordinates as a simple road map. The vertical lines of a chessboard—called **files**—are named a through h going from left to right. The horizontal rows—called **ranks**—are numbered from 1 through 8, going from bottom to top. This means that any square on the chessboard can be identified by combining the file letter with the rank number:



↑ The highlighted square here, for example, is on the f file and the 6th rank. This square is therefore f6. (The letter always comes

first.)

Now let's add the pieces. This is the starting position for a game of chess:



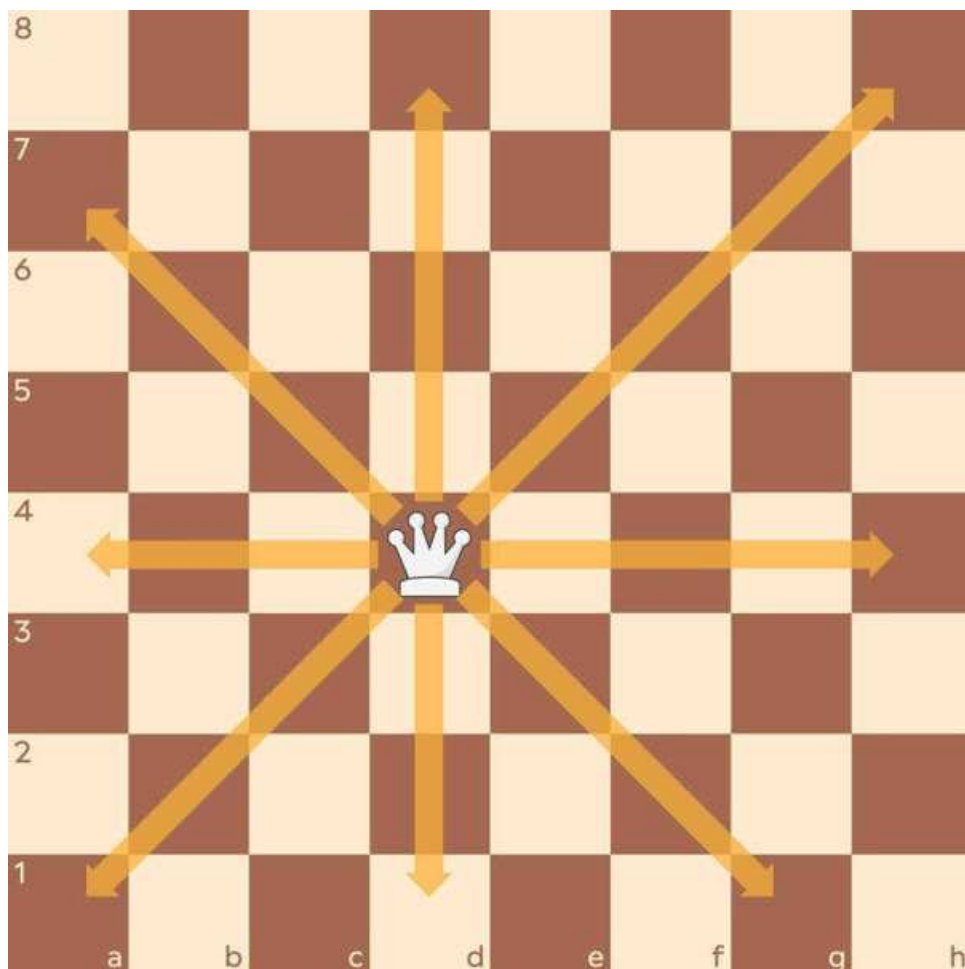
↑ White begins on the 1st and 2nd ranks, while Black begins on the 7th and 8th ranks. Each side has 16 pieces, meaning a total of 32 pieces on the board. This is how the pieces should always be configured. We'll introduce each piece next but for now, it's important to know how the pieces should be set up. Both players have a row of pawns with their major pieces behind them. Everything is symmetrical, including the kings and queens, which should be set up opposite one another—the queens should begin on the d file and the kings on the e file.

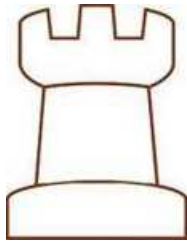
In chess, players take turns to move the pieces. White always moves first. We'll get into how to begin the game and how to win

a game of chess in the coming chapters, but before that we should introduce the pieces.

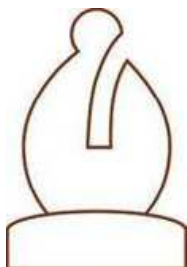
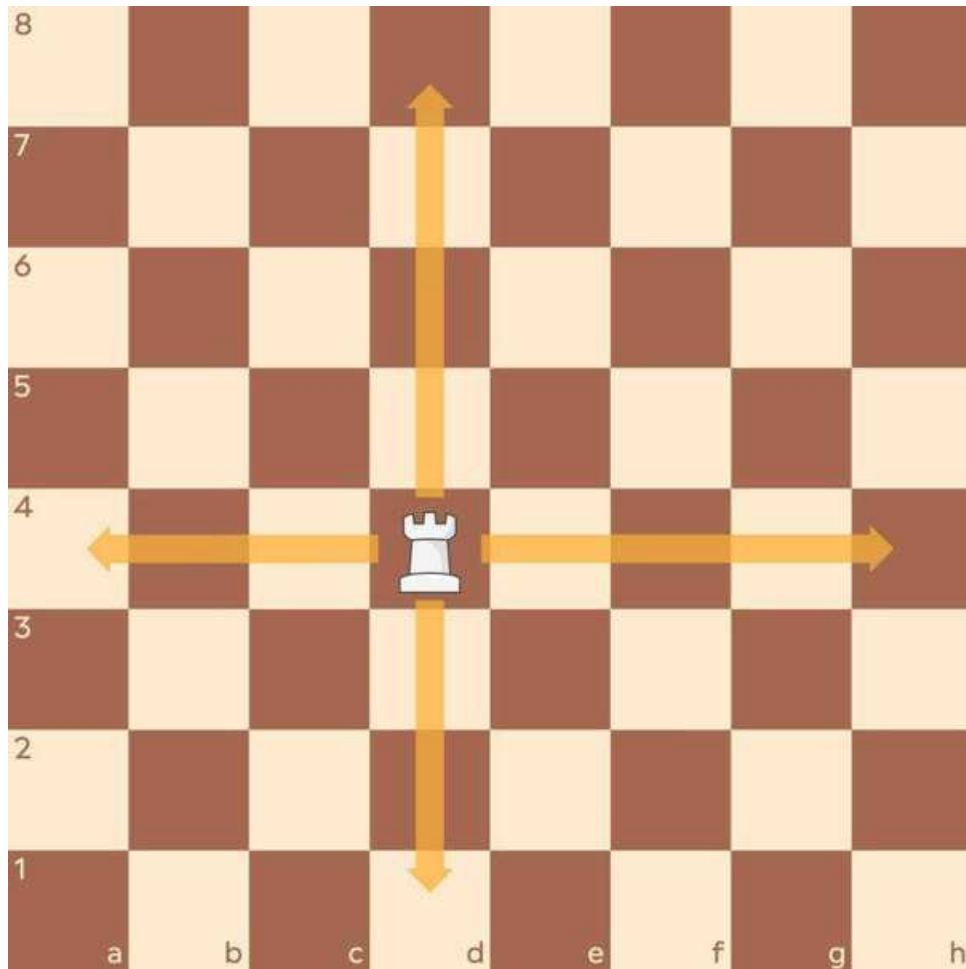


This is the **queen**. The queen is worth 9 points, making it the most valuable piece (excluding the king, which we'll come to next). It's worth noting that the "points" value of each piece is hypothetical and is only meant to express their value relative to other pieces. Each player only gets one queen. The queen can move up, down, left, right, and diagonally—and can move as many squares as it wants, providing those squares are not obstructed. The queen cannot move through or hop over other pieces, including those of the same color. On an empty chessboard, the queen could move to any of the squares along these ranks, files, or diagonals. The queen is your most powerful piece; no other piece can move in so many different directions and go as far as it wants. ↓





The **rook** is your second most valuable piece (again excluding the king), worth 5 points. You start the game with two rooks. The rook is able to move up, down, left, and right in any direction, and as many squares as it wants, providing those squares aren't obstructed by other pieces. ↓



The **bishop** is worth three points. Each player starts with two bishops, one on a light square and the other on a dark square. A bishop can move as many squares as it wants (again providing those squares aren't obstructed by other pieces), but only move diagonally. That means that your light-squared bishop will always live on the light squares of the board and vice versa for your dark-squared bishop. ↓