You can play chess without knowing how to read or write chess notation. But, to take your pursuit of understanding and study to a higher level it is important to develop a common language for instruction and dialog.

If you plan to play in competitive tournaments, the use of a ***Score Sheet*** and Notation **is usually required**.

Over time, the “Language” used to describe or notate chess has evolved and changed. There are many classical books written in the older format called **Descriptive Notation.**

Descriptive Notation is good for people to create a visual or mental image about what is going on but is difficult for computers.

In 1980 the ***Algebraic Notation*** became the international standard.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Algebraic\_notation\_(chess)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Algebraic_notation_%28chess%29).

Algebraic Notation uses a Coordinate system of **Letters** (a-h) for the columns (***FILES***) and **Numbers** (1-8) for the Rows or (***RANKS***).

The board is set up with the ***LIGHT Square in the Right*** Corner.

Square (**a1)** is positioned on ***WHITE’s Left hand side***. White is typically shown on the “Lower” or “Bottom” side and BLACK is at the top.

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|  |  |

Recording your moves is done primarily for the purpose of being able to review the game later (**ANALYSIS**) and to learn from your mistakes or seek to discover something new or better for the next time you play a game.

In the simplest form, you really just have to specify the “**FROM**” square and the “**TO**” square. You can add more description to the notation by:

a) Adding the NAME of the Piece

(**R** = Rook, **N** = kNight, **B** = Bishop, **Q** = Queen, **P** = Pawn, and **K** = King)

Some books leave out the ‘P’.

b) You can then also add a notation for: MOVEMENT (**-**) or CAPTURE (**x**).

c) The name of the piece being captured.

d) There are special codes for:

Castling (**O-O** King side or Short) **O-O-O** (Queen Side or Long)

 En Passant (ep) A very special capture made by a pawn.

 Pawn Promotion (=) When a Pawn crosses the board.

e) Other common symbols are:

 + Check

 # Checkmate

 ? Questionable (Bad) move

 ?? Very bad move BLUNDER

 ! Interesting move

 !! Excellent move

Some books may also use the ***symbolic pictures*** for the pieces.

 OR 

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Moving the Pawn in front of the White King could be:**Pe2-e4****P-e4**  **Pe4** Some players leave out the piece name in algebraic notation for Pawns and would just write: **e4** |

**If two pieces could get to the same square it is important to identify the FROM square or the name of the piece.**

**If the two pieces are the same, than the FROM square *definitely* is required.**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| If the Knight took the pawn, writing “**Nxe6**” would not be adequate to indicate which white Knight was used. How could we tell the difference? We include the *rank*and write: ***N7xe6******or g7e6 or Ng7xe6******You might also write: N7xP*** |  | There is a similar situation with the black pawn taking the white Pawn on **d5**.We need to include the file of the attacking pawn and write:***cxd5 or Pc6 x P******or c6d5 or c6 x d5******Pc6 x Pd5*** |

**Good practice is to use:**

**the Piece name**

**the 'From' square**

**and the 'To' square**

**(adding the name of the captured piece adds even more description to the move)**

**It might be longer to write,**

**but there can never be any doubt as to what piece was moved.**