

Chess Practice

101

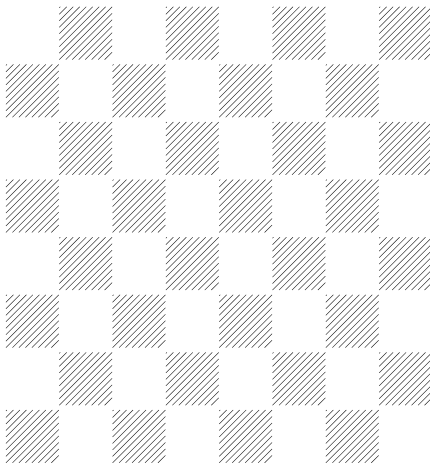
Chess Notation:

The Art of Recording Your Games.

Written by Michael Angelo Purcell
Developed exclusively for TC4K Chess Classes.
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Lesson 2: Notation

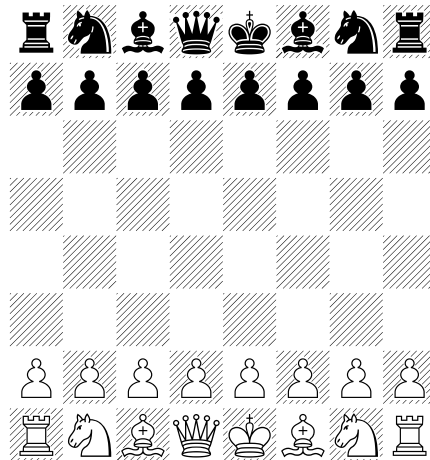
The Map: Chess is played on a 8 by 8 board of alternating light and dark squares. For the sake of consistency I will refer to the light squares as either light or white squares and the dark squares as dark or black squares. Most folks call this the chess board. I have for years referred to it as a map. The reason is the Cartesian coordinates commonly used for chess notation. Just as in city maps the chess board could be described as a map. I'll go into this in a moment. Before we get into the setup of pieces I will describe the geometry of the chess board.



The board has three dimensions we need to concern ourselves with. Up and down, across and diagonally. Squares going up and down or towards your opponent are called **files**. Squares going across or from side to side are called **ranks**. And

Squares going diagonally are naturally called **diagonals**. We are now ready to get a board and setup the pieces.

First let's see a standard setup without coordinates.



In the diagram above you will notice the board and all the pieces in their starting places. Notice also there are no coordinates and so you will need to know some rules to make sure your board is set up correctly.

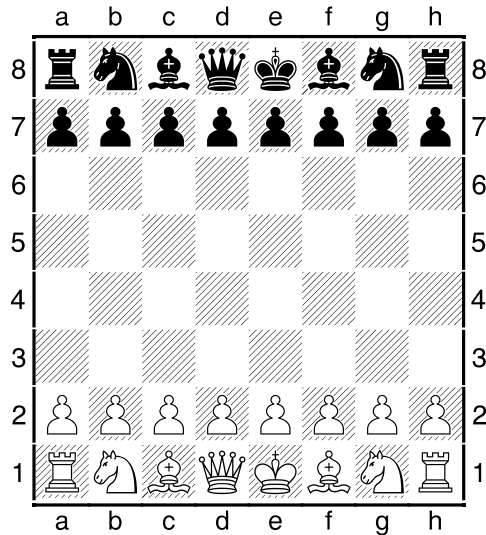
Rule 1: There is always a white square in the lower right hand corner of the board. *"White on the right is right!"*

Rule2: The Queen always sits in the middle on the square matching her color. *"White Queen goes on white and black on black."*

"Queen goes on her own color."

Now we will look at the boards which are most common when

playing tournament chess. They are the maps of chess.



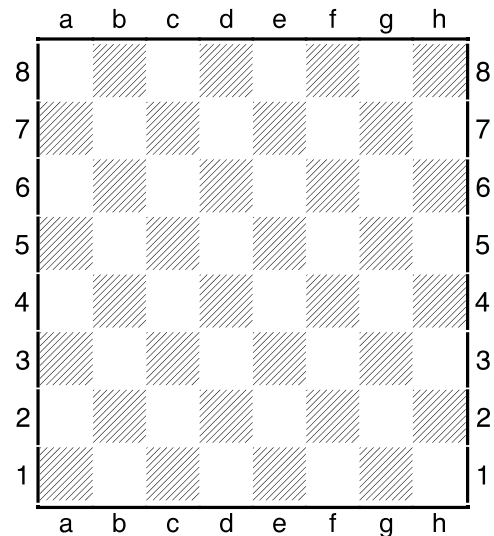
Here is a board correctly setup with the coordinates included. Again there are a few rules to make sure you are setup correctly.

Rule 1: There is always a white square in the lower right hand corner of the board. "White on the right is right!"

Rule 2: The White pieces setup on the first and second ranks. Pawns on a2 - h2 and the Pieces on a1 -h1. And the Black pieces setup on the seventh and eighth ranks. Pawns on a7 - h7 and the Pieces on a8 - h8.

Rule3: The Queen will always sit in the middle on the square matching her color. The White Queen on d1 and the Black Queen on d8. "White goes on white and black on black." "Queen goes on her own color."

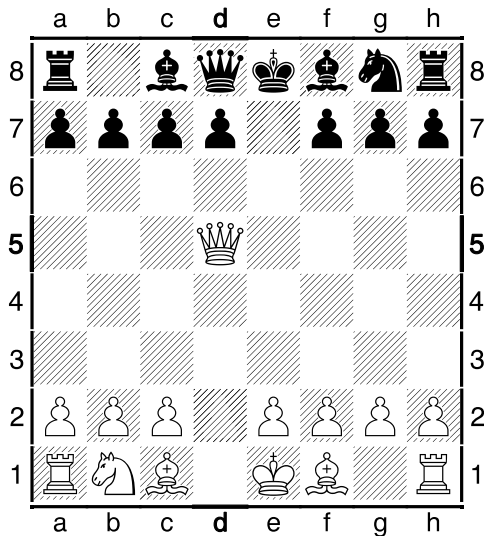
The next step is being able to find your way around the map. The Cartesian coordination system we will use to do this is very old and the system gets its name from one of the first people known to have used it, the French mathematician and philosopher Rene Descartes (1596-1650).



The **files** are named from left to right using the first 8 letters of the alphabet (a-h). The "c" file is from c1 to c8. You will notice these letters are lower case letters. This is done so not to confuse them with the first letter of some of the pieces. For example, the Bishop which is "B" .

The ranks are named with numbers from 1 to 8. The 3rd rank is from a3 to h3.

Diagonals are named by their starting and ending square. The longest dark squared diagonal goes from a1 to h8. It is called the a1 to h8 diagonal. What would you call the longest light squared diagonal? In chess notation everything is recorded in 2D.



To help you understand better the coordination system, look at the Queen in the center of the board. If you go down the file she is on at the bottom you will find the letter "d". If you go across the rank she is on in either direction you will find a number "5". This will tell you the Queen is residing on d5. Any piece can be described by its location using this system. For instance, White has a Rook on a1 and another one on h1. A Knight on b1 and g1. A Bishop on c1 and f1 and so on.

Now that we know our way around the map I am ready show you how to record your moves. But first you are probably asking why do I need or even want to write down my moves. To what benefit can it serve? All serious players who want to improve their game know that by recording games they can look over their moves after the game is over and learn from their mistakes. Recording also preserves the game so chess historians can see how you played long after you are gone. Many games that are used in scholastic chess lessons were played over a hundred years ago and because of the notation we a good idea what each player was thinking when the game was played, even though both players died long ago.

Lets move on to writing down your moves. As you learned in lesson one, each piece has a letter that is used in notation except the pawn. K is for King, Q for Queen, R for rook, B for Bishop and N is for the Knight because we already used K for the King. The actual game notation is called the score. Just as in music the score has all the information to play the game through from beginning to the end.

Games are recorded on a score sheet that usually has all the

information you will need to know who played, where the game was played, the date and the name of the tournament. Some score sheets have more information while others have less. Below is an example of an official score sheet from the United States Chess Federation.

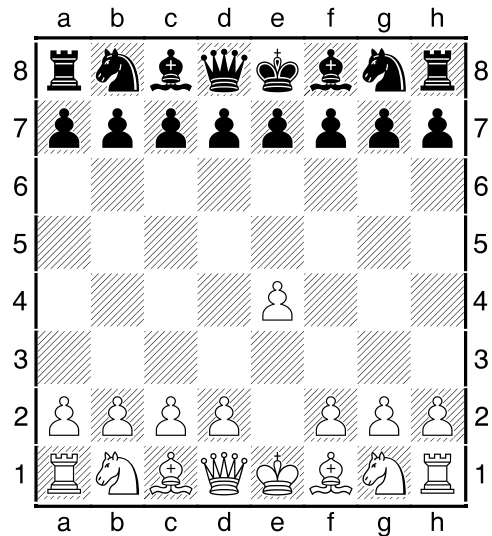
US CHESS FEDERATION		3054 U.S. ROUTE 9W NEW WINDSOR, NY 12553		OFFICIAL SCORE SHEET
EVENT			DATE	
ROUND	BOARD	SECTION	OPENING	
WHITE		PAIRING NO.	BLACK	
WHITE		BLACK	WHITE	
BLACK		BLACK		
1			31	
2			32	
3			33	
4			34	
5			35	
6			36	
7			37	
8			38	
9			39	
10			40	
11			41	
12			42	
13			43	
14			44	
15			45	
16			46	
17			47	
18			48	
19			49	
20			50	
21			51	
22			52	
23			53	
24			54	
25			55	
26			56	
27			57	
28			58	
29			59	
30			60	
CIRCLE CORRECT RESULT		WHITE WON	DRAW	BLACK WON
SIGNATURE		SIGNATURE		

There are places to for the event, date, and the players name plus a few extras. The sheet is numbered and each White move is on the left and each Black move is on the right. The score sheet is a vital piece of information during the game. It is often used to resolve disputed positions and illegal

moves. In most advanced tournaments keeping score is required.

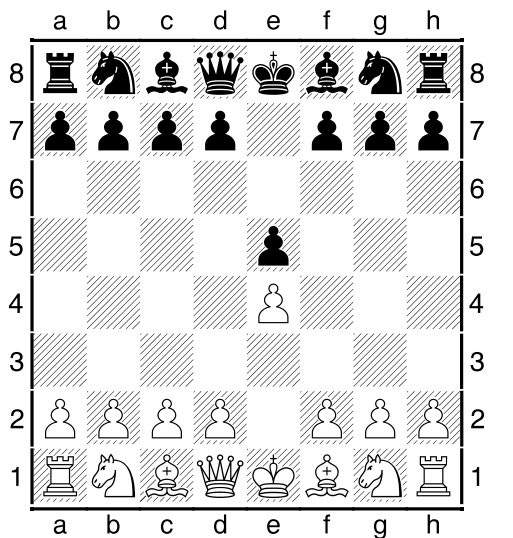
Ok now for the technique. There are many way to legally write your moves down but the general rule is to make sure any tournament director can read it. The system I use is the standard for algebraic notation which uses the board coordinates. Anyway, here goes.

Every time you move a pawn you only have to write down the square it moves to.



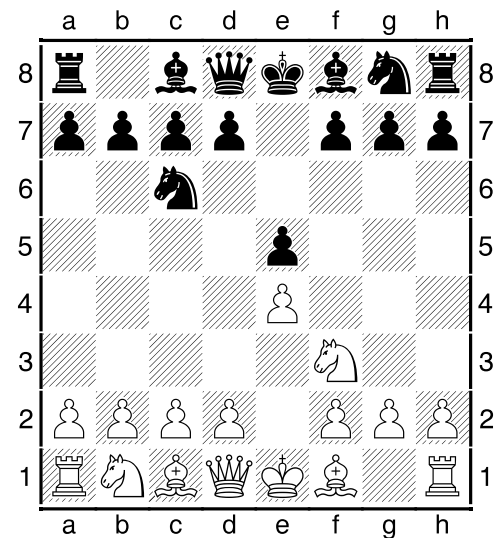
Here White moved his pawn to from e2 e4. To write it down properly you only need to write...

1. e4



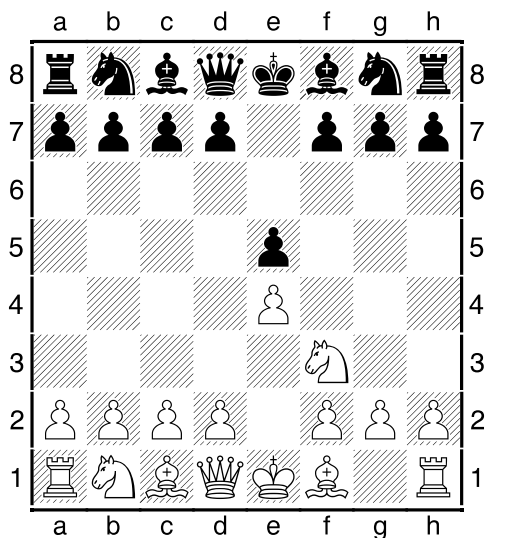
Here Black moved his pawn from e7 to e5. Since this is Black's first move it is entered to the right of White's first move.

1. e4 e5



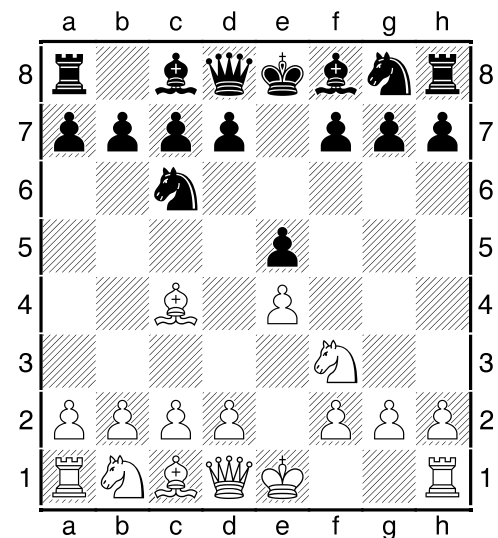
Black's second move was Knight from b8 to c6.

1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6

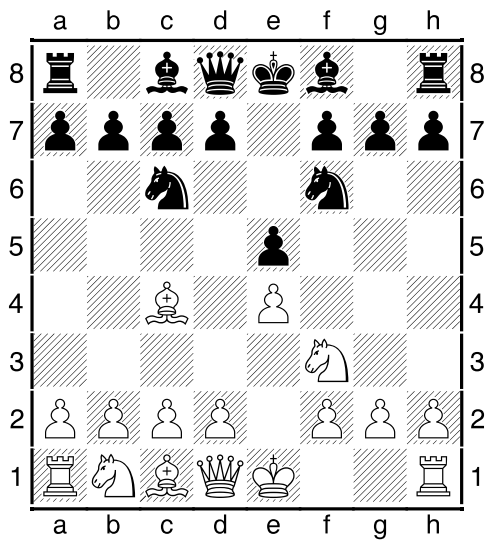


White's second move involved his Knight on g1 to f3. "N" is used for the move.

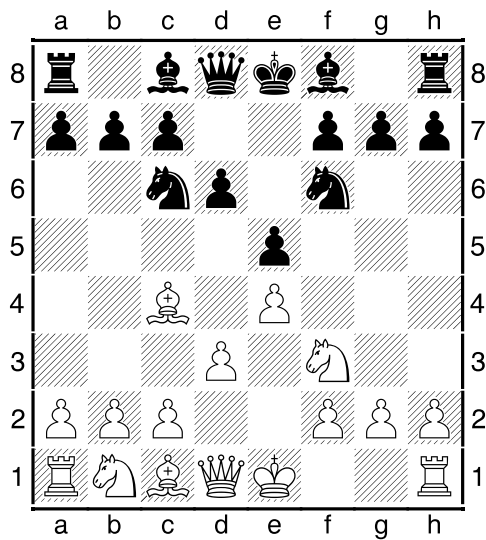
1. e4 e5
2. Nf3



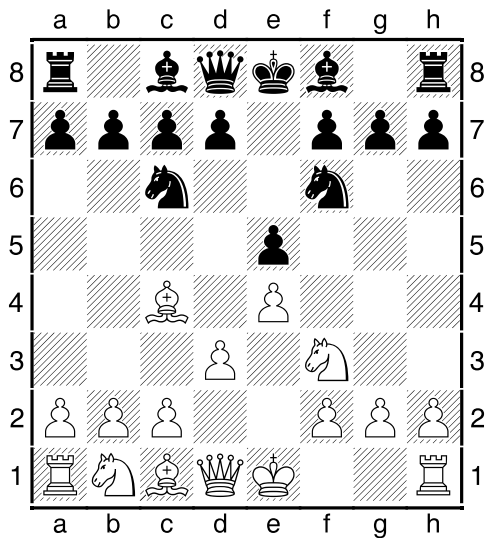
1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4



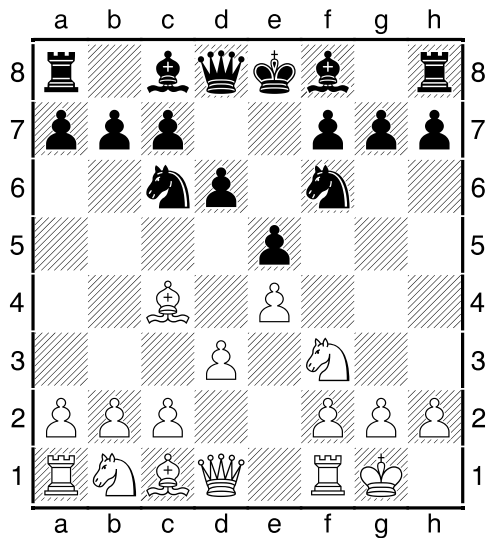
1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 Nf6



1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 Nf6
4. d3 d6

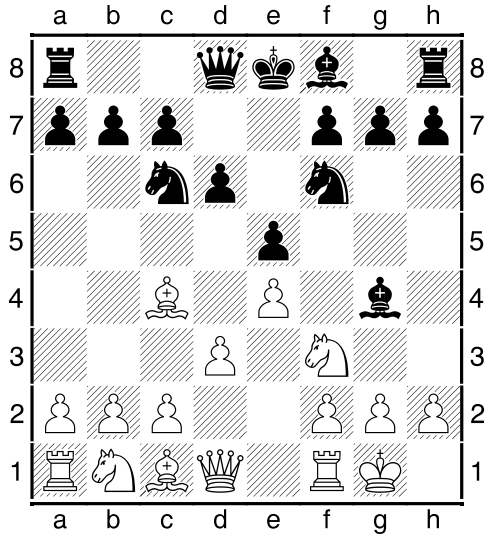


1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 Nf6
4. d3

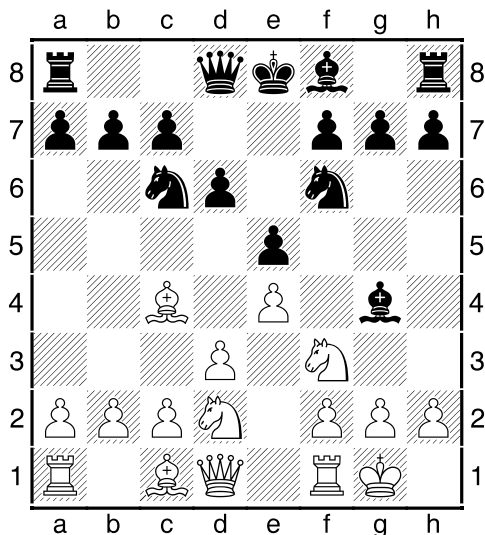


1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 Nf6
4. d3 d6

5. O-O (This is the symbol for castling Kingside. O-O-O is for Queenside.)



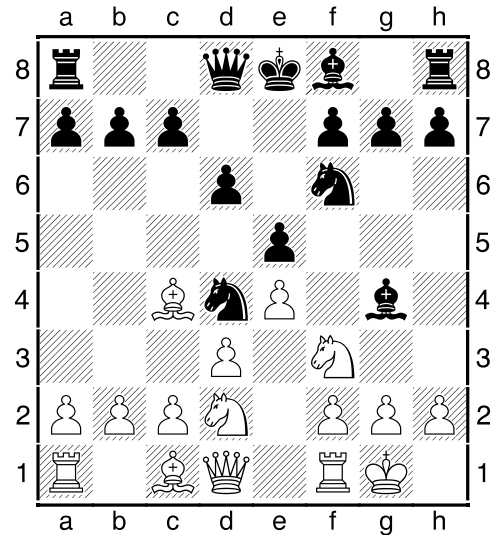
1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 Nf6
4. d3 d6
5. O-O Bg4



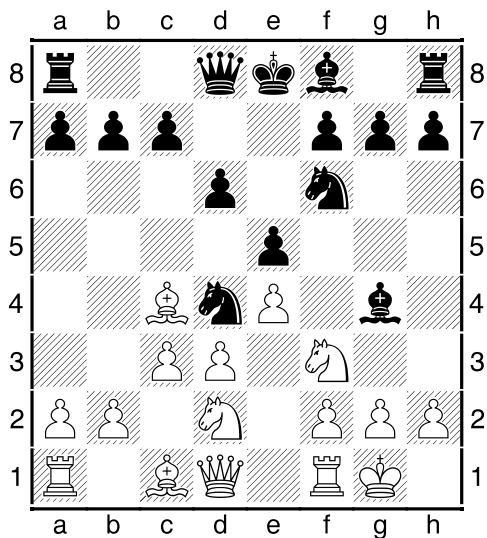
Here White's 6th move was his other Knight to d2. The problem is that both Knights could legally

move to d2. To resolve this White has to write the original square b1 along with the destination square d2. A shorter version is to just write the file name "b".

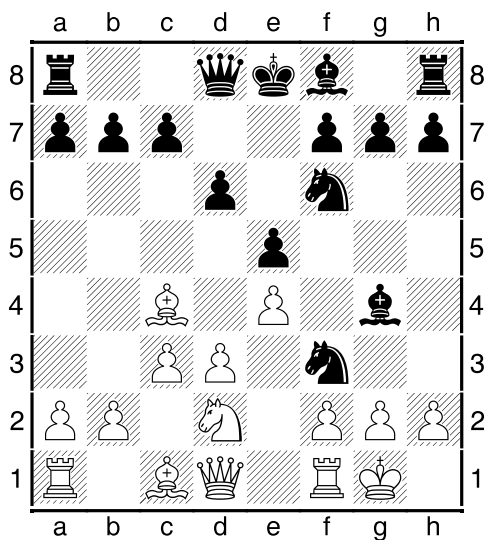
1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 Nf6
4. d3 d6
5. O-O Bg4
6. Nbd2



1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 Nf6
4. d3 d6
5. O-O Bg4
6. Nbd2 Nd4

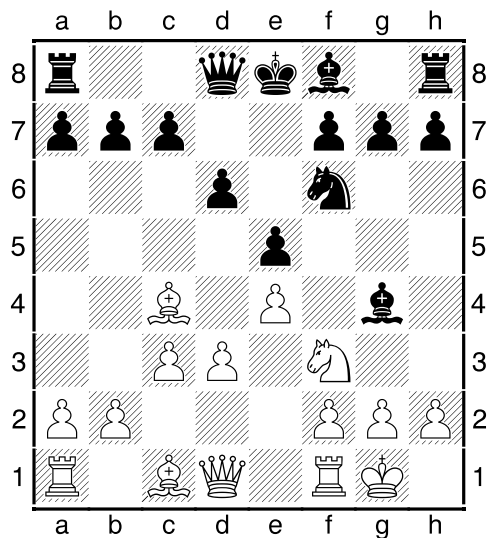


1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 Nf6
4. d3 d6
5. O-O Bg4
6. Nbd2 Nd4
7. c3

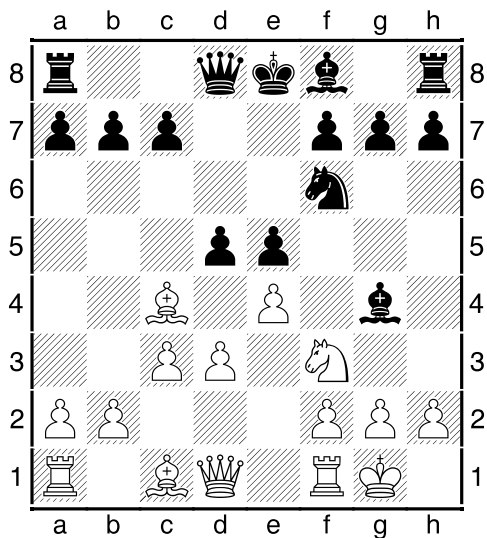


1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 Nf6

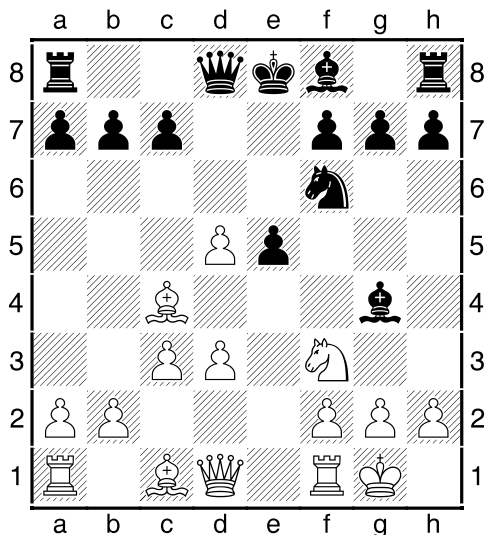
4. d3 d6
5. O-O Bg4
6. Nbd2 Nd4
7. c3 Nxf3 (x indicates a capture though it is not necessary to add the "x". Nf3 would have been legal.)



1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 Nf6
4. d3 d6
5. O-O Bg4
6. Nbd2 Nd4
7. c3 Nxf3
8. Nxf3



1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6
3. Bc4 Nf6
4. d3 d6
5. O-O Bg4
6. Nbd2 Nd4
7. c3 Nxf3
8. Nxf3 d5



1. e4 e5
2. Nf3 Nc6

3. Bc4 Nf6
4. d3 d6
5. O-O Bg4
6. Nbd2 Nd4
7. c3 Nxf3
8. Nxf3 d5
9. exd5 (Pawn captures indicate from square to destination square.)

This is essentially all that is needed to keep a proper score sheet. En passant is like any pawn capture indicating from square to destination square. Usually an (e.p.) is written after the move though not necessary.

Below is the score from a game that has all these elements.

Tallosy, M - Lungu, Constantin
[B54]

Detroit East op Detroit East, 1983

- 1.e4 c5
- 2.Nf3 d6
- 3.d4 cxd4
- 4.Nxd4 g6
- 5.Be3 Bg7
- 6.f4 Nf6
- 7.Nc3 Bg4
- 8.Be2 Bxe2
- 9.Qxe2 O-O
- 10.O-O-O Nc6
- 11.Kb1 Qc7
- 12.g4 e5
- 13.Ndb5 Qc8
- 14.f5 Nd4

15.Nxd4 exd4
16.Bxd4 Re8
17.Qf3 Qc6
18.fxg6 d5
19.exd5 Qd6
20.gxf7+ Kxf7
21.g5 Rf8
22.gxf6 Kg8
23.Rhg1 Rxf6
24.Bxf6
1-0

1-0 means White won the game. 0-1 means Black won and $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ means a draw. Get your board out and go over this game. Afterwards play several games online or with a friend or chessmaster and record the moves.

End of notation lesson.