



SCA Chess Academy Levels

SCA Chess Academy's chess courses designed for students between 4 and 18 years old and divided into 7 levels; from no experience level 1 to most advanced level 7. In order to get the most out of our teaching and training at the Academy, students are encouraged to read with attention the following guidelines.

Introductory requirements:

Level 1 is specifically designed for complete beginners, who do not know or are uncertain about the rules of chess, as a complete initiation, with no rating.

Level 2 concerns kids who have been playing/working on chess for less than 6 months. The approximate SCA Rating would be 1000-1100.

Level 3 students have usually played for 6 months to 2 years. The approximate SCA Rating would be 1100-1300.

Level 4 goes out of post-beginner teaching into competitive training, which is usually done after 1 to 3 years. SCA Rating should be at least 1200 up to 1400.

Level 5 students have been playing for more than 2 years, with an SCA Rating of 1300 to 1500.

Level 6 have been playing for more than 2 years and must have a SCA Rating of at least 1500.

Level 7 is our flagship with only our very best students. Here the recommended requirements are 3 years of learning chess and a SCA Rating above 1600.

Classes' usual content, with slight variation depending on the coach:

- Level 1: The Rules of chess, How to win, draw or lose a game, Attack, Defend and Control pieces or squares.
- Level 2: Chess Clock and Notation, Three Golden Rules, Solving of One-Move exercises, Learning which piece is stronger than another.
The Emphasis will be on Piece Movement, Checkmates and Tactics in One Move
- Level 3: Advanced Checkmates and Building Tactical Knowledge based on solving more exercises.
The Emphasis will be on Planning Ahead, Solving Tactics and Pieces Harmony.
- Level 4: Chess Culture and Manners, Traps, Advanced Tactical Knowledge, Building Strategic and Endgame Play.
The Emphasis will be on Playing Strength, Strategy and Endgames

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- Level 5: Chess Culture and Manners, Advanced Tactical Knowledge, Self-Critique of a student's own mistakes, Building Strategic and Endgame Play.
The Emphasis will be on the Analysis of the student's own games and mistakes.
- Level 6: International Rating System and Titles, Precise move orders, Deep Calculation, Medium to Advanced Strategic and Endgame Concepts.
- Level 7: International Rating System and Titles, Deep Calculation, Advanced Strategic and Endgame Concepts.

Self-Study Expectations:

While coaches will be providing quality teaching and training to every student, chess is a hard game that needs hard work to achieve improvement. Coaches may have clear requirements, that may differ depending on the trainer, about the regular use of the ChessKid platform, the solving of exercises on books and sheets provided by the Academy, or playing games every week, for example at our custom tournaments on ChessKid.

Upgrading / Downgrading Levels:

In turn, those expectations will directly influence the progression of each kid on the Level scale, granting access to our tailor-made classes. The coach is sole decider on who should or shouldn't be promoted to the next level or put back to the previous one. The factors taken into account may be regular work, knowledge tests, games or any kind of chess-related evaluation which can establish the student's integration and application of chess concepts. Attitude is a crucial component of the coach's decision and may supersede the student's chess level.

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Indicative Core Content

(may slightly differ from each coach's practice)

LEVEL 1:

- **Basics:** Piece movement, checkmate, stalemate, rules.
- **Emphasis:** Comprehend all basic rules, moves and concepts.

LEVEL 2:

- **Basics:** Notation, Clock
- **Opening:** Three Golden Rules, Big and Small Centre
- **Tactics:** Hanging Pieces, Double attack, Pin, Skewer, f-pawn Tactics, Back Rank Mate, Eliminating the Defender, Overloaded Pieces, Helper Mater, Counting, Twofold attack
- **Mate in one**
- **Endgames:** Rook Roller, King and Queen Checkmate
- **Strategy:** Activity, Centre, Favourable Exchange
- **Emphasis:** No Errors with Piece Movement, Checkmates and Tactics in One move, Attack-Defend

LEVEL 3:

- **Basics:** World Champions, Tournament Chess, Chess Culture and Manners, Different Time Control and Time Management, Fighting Spirit, Fair Play, Phases of A Chess Game.
- **Opening:** Scholar's Mate, Advanced Opening Principles
- **Tactics:** Hanging Pieces, Double attack, Pin, Skewer, f-pawn Tactics, Back Rank Mate, Eliminating the Defender, Overloaded Pieces, Helper Mater, Discovered Attack/Check, Deflection, Decoy, Trapping Pieces, Tempo, Calculation Two Moves.
- **Mate in one**
- **Endgames:** King and Rook Checkmate, Rule of the square, Opposition, Passed Pawn
- **Strategy:** Open files - 7th Rank, Find Targets to Attack (Loose pieces, King), The Opponent
- **Emphasis:** Start Planning Ahead, Solve a lot of Tactics in Two Moves, Pieces Working Together

LEVEL 4:

- **Basics:** World Champions, Tournament Chess, Chess Culture and Manners, Different Time Control and Time Management, Fighting Spirit, Fair Play, Perpetual Check, Threefold Repetition, Insufficient Mating Material
- **Opening:** Early Traps, Purposeful Development
- **Tactics:** X-Ray, Typical Sacrifices on a castled King, Attraction, Clearance, Damiano's Mate, Lolli's Mate, Anastasia's Mate, The Arabian Mate, Boden's Mate, Tactics on the h (a) file, Smothered Mate, Windmill, Desperado, Discovered Attack/Check, Deflection, Decoy, Trapping Pieces, Tempo, Interference, Underpromotion, Battering Ram, Calculation 2-3 moves.

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- **Mate in two**
- **Endgames:** King and Two Bishops Checkmate, Rule of the square, Opposition, Passed Pawn
- **Strategy:** Simple Prophylaxis, Weakness (squares, pawns, pieces), One move = One idea, Cooperation, Rook Lift, Double Pawns, Pawn Chain, Pawn Islands, Backward Pawn, Passed Pawn, Outpost, Kick them out, Blockading Passed Pawns, Bishop Pair
- **Emphasis:** Playing as many Games as possible, Study of General Endgames and Strategic Principles

LEVEL 5:

- **Basics:** World Champions, Tournament Chess, Chess Culture and Manners, Different Time Control and Time Management, Fighting Spirit, Fair Play
- **Opening:** Precise Ideas, Concrete Move Orders, Gambits
- **Tactics:** X-Ray, Typical Sacrifices on a castled King, Attraction, Clearance, Damiano's Mate, Lolli's Mate, Anastasia's Mate, The Arabian Mate, Boden's Mate Tactics on h (a) file, Smothered Mate, Windmill, Desperado, Interference, Underpromotion, Battering Ram, Zugzwang, Zwischenzug, Calculation 2-3 moves.
- **Endgames:** Pawn Breakthrough, Triangulation, Corresponding Squares, Lucena, Philidor, Queen vs a pawn on 7th rank, Opposite Coloured Bishops
- **Strategy:** Isolated Pawn, Hanging Pawns, Good and Bad Minor Pieces, Opposite Castled Kings, Capablanca's Rule on Bishops and Pawns, Minority Attack, Double Pawns, Pawn Chain, Pawn Islands, Backward Pawn, Passed Pawn, Outpost, Kick them out, Blockading Passed Pawns, Bishop Pair
- **Emphasis:** The Analysis of a Student's Own Mistakes.

LEVEL 6:

- **Basics:** FIDE, ELO, FIDE titles
- **Opening:** Precise ideas, Concrete Move Orders, Gambits
- **Tactics:** Greek Gift, Calculation Beyond Three Moves
- **Endgames:** Checkmate with Bishop and Knight, Pawn Breakthrough, Triangulation, Corresponding Squares, Lucena, Philidor, Queen vs a pawn on 7th rank, Opposite Coloured Bishops
- **Strategy:** Isolated Pawn, Hanging Pawns, Good and Bad Minor Pieces, Opposite Castled Kings, Capablanca's Rule on Bishops and Pawns, Minority Attack, Art of Exchanging Pieces
- **Emphasis:** Balanced and Regular Study of Chess

LEVEL 7:

- **Basics:** FIDE, ELO, FIDE titles
- **Opening:** Precise ideas, Concrete Move Orders, Gambits
- **Tactics:** Exchange Sacrifice, Sham Sacrifice, Calculation Beyond 4 Moves
- **Endgames:** More complicated rook and pawn endgames, Basic Minor Piece Endgames
- **Strategy:** More Advanced Strategic Concepts
- **Emphasis:** Balanced and Regular Study of Chess

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