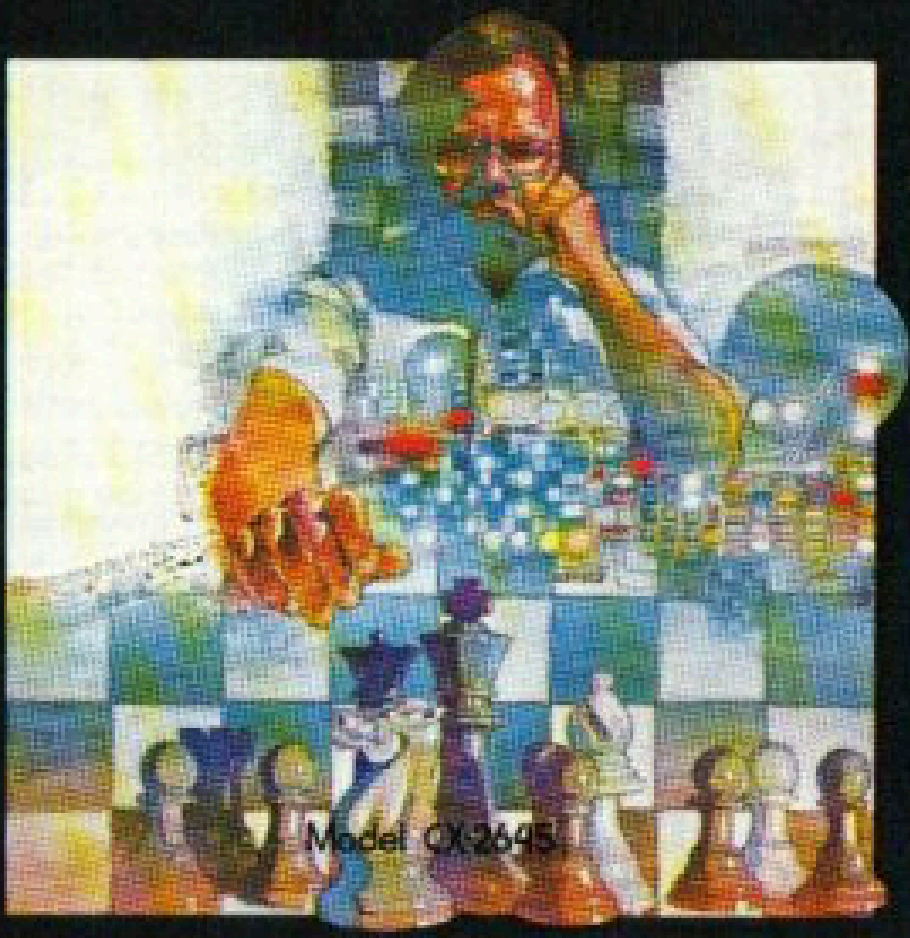
VIDEO CHESS™

GAME PROGRAM™ INSTRUCTIONS



ATARI®

A Warner Communications Company

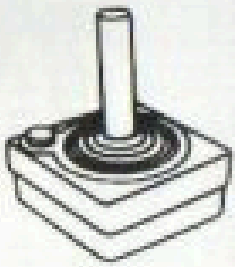
ATARI, INC., Consumer Division
1195 Borregas Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94086

© 1979 ATARI, INC.

C011402-45

Use your Joystick Controller with this Game Program™. Be sure to plug the controller cable firmly into the left jack at the rear of your Video Computer System™. Hold the controller with the red button to your upper left toward the television screen. *See Section 3 of your owners manual for further details.*

NOTE: Turn the console **off** when inserting or removing a Game Program. This will protect the electronic components and prolong the life of your Atari® Video Computer System.

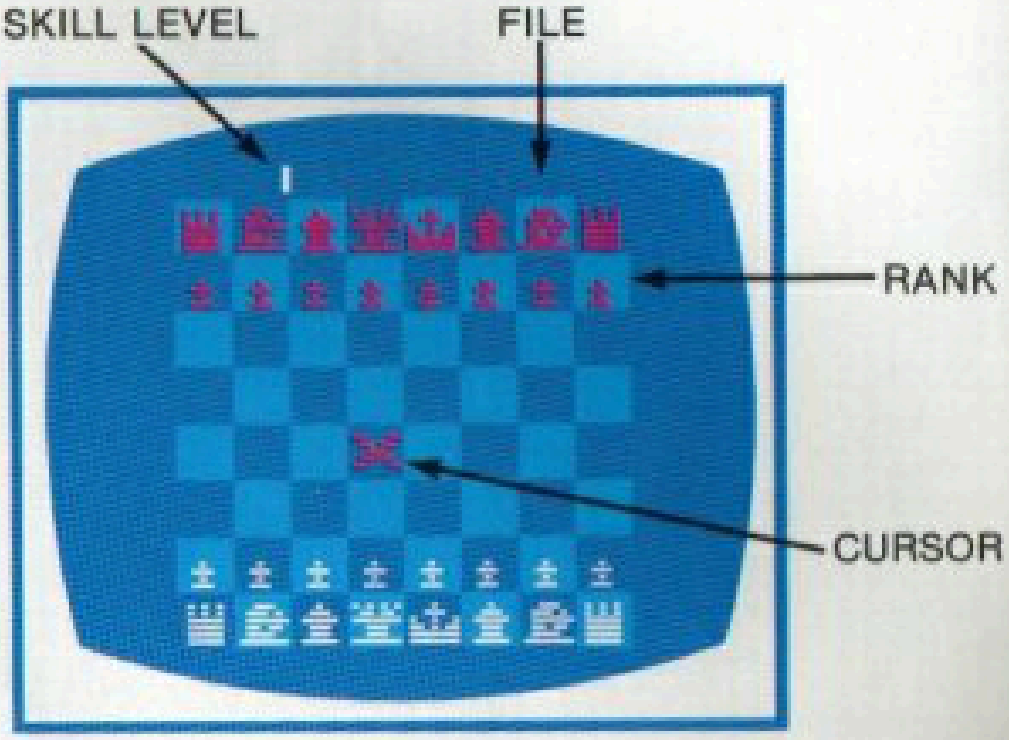


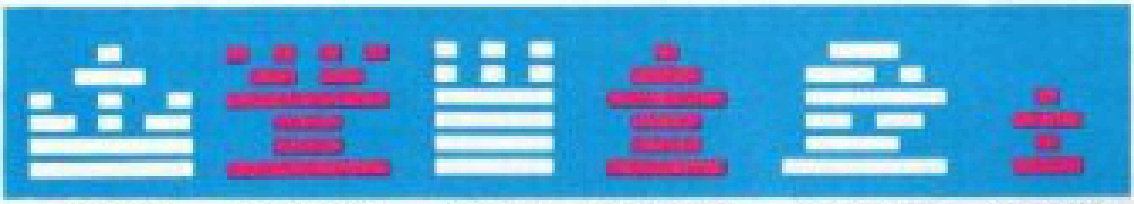
HOW TO PLAY

As one of man's oldest war games, chess is believed to have originated in India between 350 to 400 AD. The first written record of the game was in 700 AD. There are many variations of chess played throughout the world.

In any chess game, the object is to capture the opponent's king.

The computer sets up the pieces on the board in their proper order. Each player begins with 16 pieces: one king/one queen/two rooks/two bishops/two knights/eight pawns. Each piece has a distinctive move which is peculiar to itself.



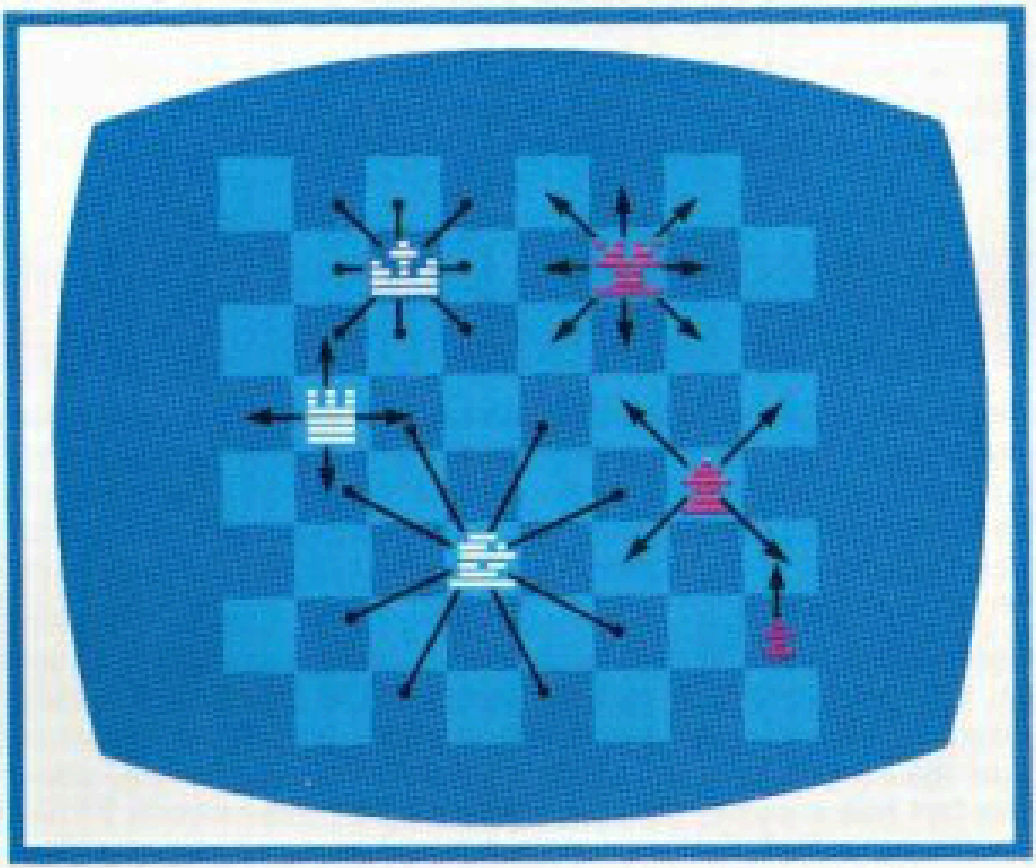


KING QUEEN ROOK BISHOP KNIGHT PAWN

KING: Your most important piece for surviving the game. The king is not very mobile since he may only move one square at a time. He may however, move in any direction; on the rank (sideward), on the file (forward or backward), or diagonally. All other pieces should be sacrificed when necessary, to save the king. The computer will not allow the king to move to a square which is under attack by an enemy piece.

QUEEN: The queen is the most mobile and versatile piece on the board, and therefore the most powerful. She moves in any direction (on the rank, on the file, or diagonally), as many open squares as desired. The queen combines the powers of the rook and bishop.

ROOK: The rook moves on the rank or file (forward, backward, sideward) as many open squares as desired. The rook is usually considered next in importance to the king and queen.



BISHOP: The bishop moves back and forth in a diagonal line, and may be moved any number of open squares. The two bishops on each side are set up so that one is tied to the light blue squares and one is tied to the dark blue squares throughout the game. A bishop is considered slightly more important than a knight, depending on it's board position.

KNIGHT: The knight moves not on a line but from point to point, following the "one up and two across" or "two up and one across" pattern shown in the diagram. The knight is unique in that it cannot be blocked, but can jump over other pieces provided it's destination is an open square, or one in which it can take and capture an opponent's piece.

PAWN: The pawn moves straight ahead one square at a time, and cannot move backward. Only on it's initial move can the pawn advance two squares, if desired. The pawn may capture opponent pieces by taking them on a diagonal move, which is the only time the pawn may move diagonally. (With one exception, see DOUBLE MOVES — "en passant.") Although the pawn is sometimes considered the least important piece, it is the "foot soldier" of chess and can be vital in holding territory.

Pawn Promotion: If you advance a pawn safely to the last or eighth square (eighth rank) on the opposite side of the board, it may be "promoted" to any other piece except a king. The computer will automatically promote your pawn to a queen since it is the most powerful piece. However, by putting the **left difficulty** switch in the **"a"** position and pressing the red controller button, you can exchange your new queen for any other piece except a king.

CAPTURING PIECES

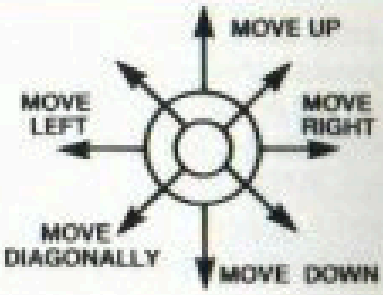
Pieces (except pawns) capture in the same manner as they move. If any square that a piece can move to is occupied by an enemy unit, that unit can be captured. The captured piece is permanently removed from the board, and the capturing piece occupies that space. Capturing is optional — you are not required to capture when able to.

Pieces are not allowed to displace or capture pieces of their own color. When capturing or moving, none of the pieces are allowed to jump over other units, except the knight. Traditionally, the capture of the king is never actually carried out. If the king is under attack but has room to escape, it is said to be in "check." The Video Chess computer has a very distinctive way to show when a king is in check which you will see during the course of a game.

If the king is attacked and there is no way to escape, it is said to be "checkmated," and the game ends.

USING THE CONTROLLERS

Use the Joystick Controller to move your pieces around the board. Move the cursor (the flashing X) to the piece you wish to move and push the red controller button. That piece will begin to flash and you may then move it in any direction. To release the piece, push the red controller button again.



IF YOU ATTEMPT TO MAKE AN ILLEGAL MOVE, THE COMPUTER WILL MAKE A WARNING SOUND AND WILL DISALLOW THE MOVE.

After you have made your move, the cursor will appear in the square from which you moved and the piece you moved will continue to flash for a moment until the computer starts to "think" its move. When the computer shows its move, the cursor will be shown in the square from which the piece was moved.

The computer always plays the pieces at the top of the screen, you always play the pieces at the bottom of the screen. In some cases, the computer will play the white pieces (from the top of the screen) and will move first (see CONSOLE CONTROLS).

CONSOLE CONTROLS

Difficulty Switches

right difficulty switch: In the **a** position the computer plays the white pieces, and moves first. In the **b** position you play the white pieces and move first. The color of the number at the top of the playfield (also denoting skill level) will tell you which color you're playing. If it is white for example, you're playing the white pieces.

left difficulty switch: In the **a** position this switch allows you to set up the board any way you want for a particular problem or situation. Move the cursor to the square where you wish to place a particular piece. Each time you press the red controller button, the computer puts a different piece on that square, starting with the computer's king and cycling through to the player's pawn. When you have placed the piece you want on the board, move the cursor to the next position and repeat the process.

To remove a piece from the board, place the cursor over that piece and cycle through past the player's pawn. An X will appear and that piece will be removed from the board. When you have the board set up the way you want it, set the left difficulty switch in the **b** position and begin play. At this point you must move first, whether or not the right difficulty switch is in the **a** or **b** position.

Game Select Switch
Depress the **game select** switch to choose the level of difficulty you wish to play. Level 8 is a learning level and is for the beginning player. It is the least difficult and is good practice for beginners. After practicing at level 8, beginning players should move to level 1. Levels 1 through 7 become progressively more difficult with level 7 being the most difficult. (See SKILL LEVELS.)

You may change the level of difficulty anytime during a game by depressing the **game select** switch.

Game Reset Switch
Depress the **game reset** switch to start or restart a game. If the computer is playing the red (black) pieces, it is not necessary to depress this switch when turning the game on. If the computer is playing the white pieces, you must depress the game reset switch before the computer will make its first move.

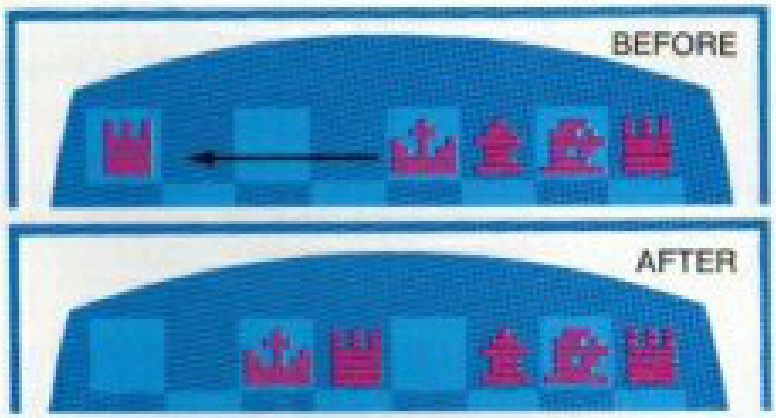
DOUBLE MOVES

There are two "double moves" allowed in the game of chess. One is known as "castling," the other is known as "en passant." The Video Chess computer may use either or both during the course of a game, and you can also.

Castling
Castling can be an offensive or defensive move. To castle, the squares between the king and one of the rooks must be clear. The king or the rook may not have been moved previously. This move protects the king and moves the rook to the center of the board where it can be more effective.

When you have set up the board as described, move your king two spaces to the right or left (depending on which way you are castling), and push the red controller button. The computer will automatically bring the rook around the king, thereby completing your castling move. The computer will then think its next move.

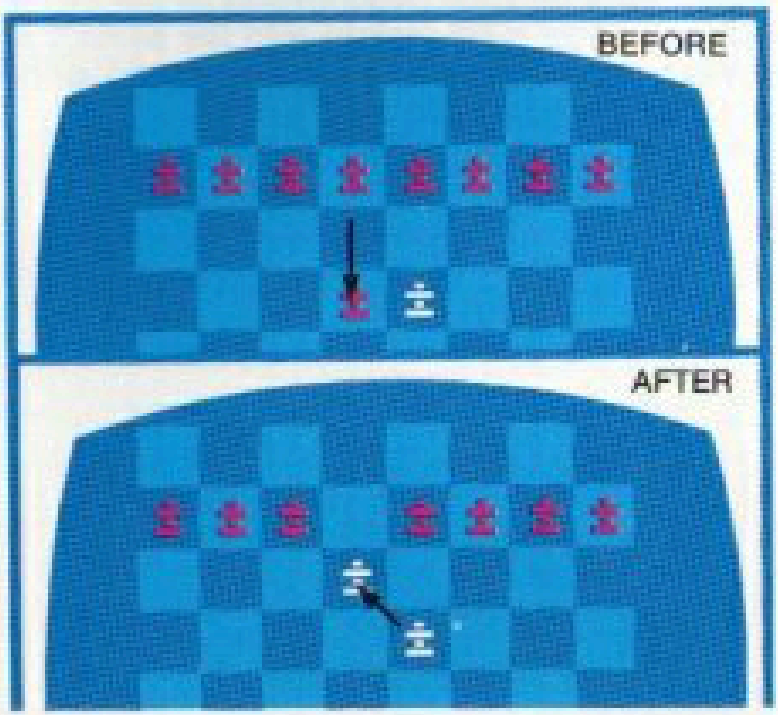
If you move the king toward the rook on its side of the board it is called "castling to the king's side." If the king is moved toward the queen's side, it is called "castling to the queen's side."



A player may not use the castling move when the king is in check. Nor may a player castle to the king's side if any of the squares between the king and the rook are threatened. The former example is called "castling out of check"; the later example is known as "castling across check."

NOTE: If, after setting up a chess problem, your initial move is to castle, the computer may not accept it as a legal move.

En passant (In passing)
This move is used to counteract the enemy pawn's initial double move on an adjacent file. To carry out the en passant you must advance your pawn to the fifth rank. Your opponent then has the option of moving his or her pawn one square (where it would be under attack) or two squares. If your opponent elects to move two squares, the en passant move allows you to take that pawn by diagonally moving your pawn to the square that was skipped over.



NOTE: There may be some occasions where the computer will not allow you to use en passant to move out of check. If this should occur, use the set-up mode to complete the move.

The en passant capture must be made immediately, meaning when the opportunity is first available, or not at all. It cannot be executed at a later turn.

SKILL LEVELS

There are seven progressively more difficult skill levels (Levels 1 through 7) in Video Chess and one level for beginners (Level 8). As the levels increase from 1 to 7, the computer will take longer to compute its next move. The times listed below for each Skill Level are an average, since the length of time will depend on the complexity of the board and the level chosen. Level 8 is an excellent game for beginners to learn the moves, as well as some of the strategies of the game.

Level 1— 15 seconds
Level 2— 30 seconds
Level 3— 45 seconds
Level 4— 2 min., 45 sec.
Level 5— 3 min., 15 sec.
Level 6— 12 minutes
Level 7— 10 hours
Level 8— 10 seconds

NOTE: Length of time on some of the above Skill Levels may vary.

As a closing note it should be pointed out that there are various books which give more detailed descriptions of the game of chess. Such books may give you more insight into the game's wide range of strategies. We suggest going to your local library or book store if you wish to study the game further.

Printed in USA Rev. 1