

FALL 2018

# STLCC Scholastics Curriculum Guide



## Dear Scholastic Chess Instructors:

It is with great pleasure and pride that we present to you the Saint Louis Chess Club's Curriculum. These efforts were inspired in large part by feedback from instructors, who expressed a desire for more instructional guidance and resources. Many of you indicated a demand for a roadmap of what the students needed to learn and the resources to help you get there. The Scholastics Team took that to heart and collaborated with a team of educational experts and Grandmaster Maurice Ashley to produce materials for the first few years of chess instruction.

The STLCC Curriculum provides instructional resources to assist you in the classroom. The curriculum aligns with the STLCC Standards, which outline the topics taught within each semester of instruction. Some of you may want to adopt this curriculum entirely, and others may feel very comfortable with the instructional tools you have used for many years. We do note that great teachers are always learning, and we encourage you to review the curriculum for exercises and worksheets that can be of value to your instructional practice. And, we hope that you will share what curricular resources work well in your classroom so that we can improve our curriculum.

The Scholastics Team are, like the Lesson Plans, here to help. We stand ready to support you in any way possible, and our door is always open. Do not hesitate to ask us for any explanations or materials that will help your teaching.

Lastly, please accept our hearty thanks for bringing local students into the worldwide chess community. You are on the front lines of teaching chess to children—one of the most rewarding and challenging jobs. We hope that this resource will help you do your best.

**Sincerely,**  
**The Saint Louis Chess Club Scholastics Team**

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## CURRICULUM GUIDE

# STLCC Instructional Expectations

## Expectations and Goals

### Be Enthusiastic

The Instructor sets the tone for the classroom and the learning experience. Make it Joyous! Come to class with energy, acting as a model for the students to follow. Students will follow your lead, make it count every day.

### Have Fun!

These students are about to play the best game in the world. Give them a chance to experience it and believe that chess can change the way they think, act, and approach the world around them. Implement games, videos, and your own creative ideas to keep the level of fun high.

### Be Prepared

Great teachers plan ahead. Coming to class with all of your prep work done will be paramount for running a successful class, and meeting the learning targets. Review the lesson plans, curriculum standards, and the resources that have been made available to you beforehand to avoid possible pitfalls during the already limited class time that we have with our students. Our ultimate goal is to get our students playing chess and playing well, and this requires strong planning.

### Provide a Safe Learning Environment

Classroom management is critical to learning. STLCC Instructors are expected to be attentive, control their classrooms, and effectively manage student behaviors.

### Engage All Students at Their Level

Scaffolding and determining the correct zone of proximal development is a difficult task. Engaging students well requires the ability to differentiate material, content, time, and, most importantly, instruction. This “Zone of Proximal Development” refers to the learners highest given talents and their lowest areas of development. Scaffolding is the instructor’s ability to identify this zone for each student and offer appropriate challenges that push the student to grow. Instructors should also provide achievable goals for those students who may be struggling.

### Always Show Up Early to Class

Our primary goal is to provide the best chess instruction to our students. The schools that we service, the students that we serve, and the generous people who fund these programs all have expectations that we need to meet. Showing up on time, ready to teach is and will always be an integral part of this job. (See also “Be Prepared”)

### Learn and Play Chess

This is why we are here. Every class meeting must have time designated for the students to play. It can be done by playing a chess variant, enjoying one of the provided lesson activities, or playing a full game of chess. Students need to be moving the pieces. Structure your lessons to keep a tempo and flow that allows for meaningful play time. Seeing students engaged in chess, moving the pieces, critically thinking, and planning their next move are the qualities of an effective chess program.

## CURRICULUM GUIDE

# An Overview of Instructional Standards

**The Saint Louis Chess Club (STLCC) Instructional Standards provide the organizational backbone to the STLCC Curriculum.**

These Standards introduce chess to students in a way that strategically introduces the basics first so that students quickly learn to play a legal game of chess. They also provide STLCC Instructors with a roadmap for their classes and a common instructional language. Below are the first seven Standards of Level 1 to help illustrate this point:

### Level 1: Rules and Terminology

- 1.1A Describe and practice chess classroom etiquette.
- 1.1B Identify the pieces on a chessboard.
- 1.1C Demonstrate how to set up a chessboard.
- 1.2A List the attributes of the chessboard including squares, square colors, ranks, files, and diagonals.
- 1.2B Recognize individual square coordinates and know to use this terminology when referring to squares.
- 1.3A Demonstrate how each piece moves on a chessboard, including pawn promotion (not castling, or *en passant*).
- 1.3B Demonstrate how each piece captures.

**The STLCC Instructional Standards have the following characteristics:**

**Competency-Based:** Standards are not linked to a specific grade, and hence can be used in kindergarten, 7th grade, or even with adults. Students and classes are advanced to the next Level when they have mastered the material, not based on an arbitrary timeline.

**Approximately a Semester Length:** While Standards are not connected to a grade, it is helpful to have a benchmark. The twelve instructional Levels are designed so that a typical third-grade classroom could complete a Level in a single semester within 10-15, one-hour classes.

**Sequentially-Ordered:** The Standards are sequenced in order to facilitate a logical progression from a chess beginner to advanced player, with concepts scaffolded throughout the first six Levels.

**Grouped by Theme:** The Standards are grouped by overarching thematic principles to allow comprehensive coverage in lower Levels and thorough coverage in later ones.

**Universal:** The Standards are designed for use within both in-school and after-school classes. In instructional contexts where students have varying levels of expertise, the standards can be applied using differentiated instructional techniques.

**Teach More Than Chess:** Each Level includes a historical/cultural chess lesson—the origins of chess, biographies of Grandmasters, etc—or a broader life lesson—teamwork, persistence, planning, or actions/consequences.

# CURRICULUM GUIDE

## Lesson Plan Tour

A Sample Lesson Plan is shown below, with call-out bubbles that highlight how you can use this resource as you plan your instructional lessons.

### LESSON 1.5 Knight Moves

#### Lesson Structure

##### Chess Goals and Classroom Expectations

In this lesson students will continue developing the standards from the previous lesson and learn how the knight moves and captures.

##### Chess Instruction

**Getting Started:** Review the movement of rooks, bishops, and the queen.

**Demonstrate knight movement and captures:** Students need to identify the knight moves in an uppercase “L” shape, which can be reflected and rotated from the knight’s central point.

**Focus on the leap:** Demonstrate a piece that can “jump” over another piece. *Explain that the knight only captures pieces that it lands on, not the ones in between.*

##### Play

Suggested: **Activity 1.5.2** and **Activity 1.5.5**

2 The **Lesson Structure** suggests how your instruction could run. It typically begins with a review of what was covered in the previous class, then covers the core content of the day. Also look for common student mistakes in understanding.

3 This section describes activities that target beginner or advanced students with appropriate materials.

4 Successive pages within the Lesson Plans provide suggested classroom Activities that allow students to practice and apply what they learn, and worksheets that can be used in class or as homework.

#### 1 START HERE

Review the right-hand column, which tells you what standards will be covered during the lesson, what materials you will need, and the vocabulary words you should cover.

#### STANDARDS

**1.3A** Demonstrate how each piece moves on a board, including pawn promotion (not castling, or *en passant*).

**1.3B** Demonstrate how each piece captures.

#### MATERIALS

Demo Board or Tablet & Projector

Chessboards and Pieces

Worksheets:

1.5.1 Bullseye Knights

1.5.2 Knight Mower

#### DIFFERENTIATION

##### ADVANCED STUDENTS

Activity 1.5.3

##### NOVICE STUDENTS

One-on-one instruction, develop one-move problems for students struggling to recognize the knight pattern.

#### VOCABULARY

##### Knight

Each player begins the game with two knights placed on b1, g1, b8, and g8. The knight is the only piece allowed to jump over other pieces and it moves in a capital “L” shape in any direction.

## CURRICULUM GUIDE

### Lesson Plan Tour

#### FIDE Rules

Occasionally within the Lesson Plans, we reference a specific FIDE rule. This occurs when the chess rule is nuanced, obscure or rarely used, so we provide this so that instructors can read the actual rule text. We use this format and a link to the official FIDE rules (Example: [FIDE Rule 9.6](#)).

#### And Finally, Pacing & Sequencing

The **Standards & Lesson Plans** we have provided you provide the organizational backbone to STLCC Scholastics chess instruction. They are not linked to a specific grade, and hence can be used in kindergarten, 7th grade, or even with adults. Students and classes are advanced to the next Lessons or Levels when they have mastered the material, not based on an arbitrary timeline.

While standards are not linked to a grade, it is helpful to have a benchmark. The twelve instructional Levels are designed so that a typical third-grade classroom could complete a Level in a single semester within 12-16, one-hour classes – typically a single semester. This will not hold true for all classrooms – some will require slower pacing and some will be able to move more quickly. As a chess instructor, you will have the most accurate knowledge about the skill level of your students. We are dependent on your experience and skill as a teacher to choose the appropriate instructional pacing for your students.

#### The Lesson Plans are NOT written as a script.

Novice teachers may confidently follow them carefully, while more experienced teachers may merely sample from them. You may use ideas from them more selectively. Your instructional sequence should vary based on the classroom context and your comfort level. Many instructors will find that a typical sequence of Discussion – Activity – More Discussion – Activity – Play helps facilitate student movement and engagement. The lesson plans are a supportive resource, and you should implement a selection from each in a sequence appropriate for your context.

#### Credits

*A collaborative team of Chess Club staff, allies, and researchers created the STLCC Scholastics Curriculum. Contributions were made as follows: Grandmaster Maurice Ashley provided the broad structure and originating ideas. Richard Pointer provided editorial control over the content. Kyle Weber oversaw the creation of Activities and Worksheets. Kareem Talhouni, Jeremy Compton, and Tony Chen provided additional assistance. Paige Pedersen and Jesse Richardson provided graphics and website support, respectively. Finally, Dr. Matthew Pepper from Basis Policy Research and Professor Brian Kisida from the University of Missouri originated the concept and facilitated the process from start to finish.*