

## International Chess School Program for Strategy

Here we present the 12-month program of study of ICS for **Strategy**. Our course also includes preparation for endgames (in the second half of the course) and tactical preparation throughout the entire course.

**Month 01:** we teach the correct way of thinking in chess, evaluate the student's level at the beginning and give the criteria of positional evaluation.

**Month 02 – Month 06:** we teach the very important positional factors, giving systematized theoretical lessons, instructive games and simple exercises up to hard problems for solving.

**Month 07 – Month 10:** we present typical pawn structures and situations, giving clear indications and plans of play

**Month 11 – Month 12:** Advanced Lessons - in these 2 months, we present more complex themes and study advanced techniques of play

**Month 13 (Bonus):** Prepare for strong opponents and hard games

### More detailed:

Month	Topics	Notes / other materials
<b>01</b>	<p>In the first month, we introduce the correct way of thinking in chess that, then, we follow by the manner of annotating games and explanations we give throughout the course.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How to think in chess (“TO DO” and consequences)</li> <li>- Making decisions in chess – a simple yet very practical guide for choosing the best move in chess</li> <li>- Evaluation of positions with material imbalances</li> <li>- Evaluation of positions with the same material</li> </ul>	<p><b>TEST 01</b> – a very hard test to evaluate the strategical strength of the student up to 2300 level. This test should not discourage but give a real value at the beginning of the course.</p> <p>- Exercises and problems for training the new and correct way of thinking in chess.</p>
<b>02</b>	<p>After giving the criteria and factors for an exhaustive positional evaluation, we will study them in details during Months 02 – 06:</p> <p><b>King's Safety</b> The king as a criterion of positional evaluation.</p> <p><b>The Centre</b> Types of centers and specific plans of play for each type; illustrative games.</p>	<p>Annotated games and exercises for “King's safety”.</p> <p>A collection of many selected games for “The Centre”. Going quicker through these games will give the student a good understanding of typical and different strategies specific to the pawn formation in the centre.</p>

<p><b>03</b></p>	<p><b>Piece Quality / Evaluation – Theory</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Better development</li> <li>2. Piece out of play</li> <li>3. Local force superiority</li> <li>4. Collaboration between pieces</li> <li>5. Rooks on open files</li> <li>6. Bishops on important diagonals</li> <li>7. Knights on important foreposts</li> <li>8. Bishop pair</li> <li>9. Safe and active queen</li> <li>10. Piece quality comparison</li> </ol>	<p>During Months 03-06 we study very important positional factors, ways of getting strategical advantage, ways of fighting with and against these advantages.</p>
<p><b>04</b></p>	<p><b>Piece Quality / Evaluation - Problems</b> The fourth month of the School is one of the hardest for the student. A lot of positions are given for study, ranging from simpler exercises to hard problems taken from real practice.</p>	<p>The study of these factors is divided as you can observe in the second column: one month of theory followed by a second month of exercises and problems. 2 Months are for Piece Quality, 2 Months are for Pawn Quality.</p>
<p><b>05</b></p>	<p><b>Pawns Quality and Play - Theory</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Space advantage</li> <li>2. Weak pawns</li> <li>3. Superior pawn structure</li> <li>4. Dynamism of pawn structure</li> <li>5. Mobile pawn majority</li> <li>6. Free pawn</li> </ol>	<p><b>TEST 02</b> – the second hard test to evaluate the strategical strength of the student will be given at the end of Month 06. The problems are carefully chosen to be of the same difficulty as of the first test. The student should already observe a very big step forward in his understanding and subsequently get a much bigger score.</p>
<p><b>06</b></p>	<p><b>Pawn Quality and Play - Problems</b> Exercises and Problems for study, again a hard month for the student who will have to work on many problems for an entire month.</p>	
<p><b>07</b></p>	<p><b>Typical pawn structures I</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Isolani and derivates</li> <li>2. Carlsbad</li> <li>3. Dragon and reversed Dragon</li> <li>4. Stonewall</li> <li>5. Botvinnik structure</li> </ol>	<p>During 4 Months (07 – 10), we present all the major typical pawn structures in chess.</p>
<p><b>08</b></p>	<p><b>Typical pawn structures II</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Hedgehog</li> <li>7. Double fianchetto</li> <li>8. Benoni</li> <li>9. Volga (Benko)</li> <li>10. King’s Indian Defense</li> </ol>	<p>Their study is very important as a lot of middlegame positions can be framed in one of these structures. Their names usually are associated with the openings where they derive from, but similar positions can arise easily anytime.</p>
<p><b>09</b></p>	<p><b>Typical pawn structures III</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Nimzovich structures</li> <li>12. Grunfeld</li> <li>13. Catalan</li> <li>14. Slav structures</li> </ol>	<p>The student will learn how to play these structures and how to get them in good</p>

<p><b>10</b></p>	<p><b>Typical pawn structures IV</b>  15. Sicilian Scheveningen  16. Sicilian Najdorf  17. English Attack (Sicilian)</p> <p><b>Typical situations</b>  As typical pawn structure, there are some typical situations in chess as well. We will study them here.</p>	<p>conditions. Moreover, we can say that the chess culture of the student will be greatly increased and he will understand the beauty of complexity of the chess game – a necessary condition for a solid improvement.</p>
<p><b>11</b></p>	<p><b>The essence of the position</b>  - Determine which of the positional factors is/are the most important in our exact, particular position (the <b>essence</b> of the position)  - Determine the turning points of the battle (<b>the key-positions</b>)  - a lot of exercises and problems to work on determine the essence of the position</p> <p><b>Playing strategies</b>  - The exchange  - The defense (active defense, counter-attack, the bluff and other ways of defense)  - Elimination of weaknesses (pawns, squares and pieces) in the own position</p>	<p><b>TEST 03</b> – the third hard test to evaluate the strategical strength of the student will be given at the beginning of the eleventh month. The problems are carefully chosen to be of the same difficulty as of the first test. The serious student should already get a high score.</p> <p>During Month 11-13, we study complex and very complex strategies of play. A high-level of playing chess is brought to you explained so that you can understand and apply in your games.</p>
<p><b>12</b></p>	<p><b>Play and Anti-play</b>  - The fight for obtaining positional advantages  - The fight for initiative  - Prophylaxis at the master level  - Anti Play  - Choosing the strategy of play function of the opponent  - Transformation of the position  - Rearrangement of Pieces</p>	
<p><b>13</b></p>	<p><b>Master Strategies</b>  To win against a very strong player, you need to be very determined and to play better than him during all the 3 stages of the game. Simply to say, harder to do. In this last month, given as bonus, we give a set of practical lessons with very instructive annotation, guides and tips for how to beat a chess master.</p>	<p><b>TEST 04</b> – the fourth and final hard test to evaluate the strategical strength of the student will be given at the end of the ICS course. The problems are carefully chosen to be of the same difficulty as of the other tests.</p>