



Which Chess Level is Right for My Child?

At Chess with Mr. S, we place students based on skill, confidence, and learning readiness — not just age.

To help families better understand our levels, we use Chess.com ratings as a general guide, alongside what students can comfortably do in a class setting.

Important note: Chess.com ratings are only a reference point, not a requirement. Many students fall slightly above or below these ranges, and that's completely normal.

CWMS COURSE LEVELS

Newbie



Our Newbie Level class is our introductory course to chess! In this class, students are taught the very basics of chess with a fun, exciting and engaging approach. Our students will learn all of the piece movements, check, checkmate, pawn promotion and castling. This course is recommended for students without any experience in chess and aged 4-6 years old. Note: this class is 1 hour in length.

Chess.com guide: 100–149

Best for students who:

- Are brand new to chess or have very limited experience
- Are learning how the pieces move
- Are being introduced to check, checkmate, and basic rules

Class length: 60 minutes

Typical progression: Automatically advances after 16 weeks (one semester)

Focus: Fundamentals, confidence, and building excitement for chess

Beginner



Our Beginner Level course teaches students the ideas and principles in the beginning or "opening" of chess. Here we cover simple opening ideas and basic tactics including forks, pins, back-rank mates, and the sometimes tricky "en passant" rule for pawns. This course prepares students for attacking ideas and fun ways to quickly finish a game of chess.

Chess.com guide: 150–249

Best for students who:

- Know how all the pieces move
- Understand check and checkmate
- Are learning simple tactics such as forks and pins
- Are beginning to think beyond one move at a time

Class length: 75 minutes

Typical progression: Automatically advances after 16 weeks (one semester)

Focus: Strong habits, pattern recognition, and understanding the basics well

Intermediate



Our Intermediate Level course begins to discuss strategies for attacking "castled kings" and further discusses tactics such as discovered attacks and discovered checks, double check, creating pins, forks and the power of "maximized pieces". This course is tons of fun and is a foundation class for our Advanced courses.

Chess.com guide: 250–399

Best for students who:

- Can regularly spot simple tactics
- Understand basic opening principles (the ABCs of chess: control the center, develop pieces, castle early)
- Are starting to plan instead of reacting move-by-move

Class length: 90 minutes

Typical progression: Automatically advances after 16 weeks (one semester)

Focus: Deeper thinking, consistency, and decision-making

Advanced 1



Our Advanced 1 Level course focuses on expanding students' understanding of key middlegame ideas, strategies, and tactics. Topics include opposite-side castling, pawn storms, the use of open files, and sacrificial ideas to break open the opponent's king. In addition to middlegame play, the course introduces fundamental endgame concepts such as opposition, pawn structures, and essential endgames students are likely to encounter.

Chess.com guide: 400–549

Best for students who:

- Play regularly online or in structured classes
- Are comfortable with multiple tactical ideas
- Are beginning to study openings, middlegames, and basic endgames

Class length: 90 minutes

Typical progression: Automatically advances after 16 weeks (one semester)

Focus: Competitive foundations and structured improvement

	<h3>Advanced 2</h3> <p>Our Advanced 2 Level course focuses on positional awareness and anticipating your opponents moves and strategies. Among other concepts, in this course we discuss candidate moves, prophylaxis, piece maximization and gaining initiative. This course is tons of fun and helps to prepare students for tournament play.</p>	<p>Chess.com guide: 550–699</p> <p>Best for students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Can calculate multiple moves ahead ✓ Understand attacking ideas and defensive concepts ✓ Are working on consistency and reducing mistakes <p>Class length: 90 minutes</p> <p>Typical progression: Typically 32 weeks (two semesters)</p> <p>Focus: Calculation, strategy, and competitive growth</p>
	<h3>Advanced 3</h3> <p>Our Advanced 3 Level course works to build on our students existing knowledge putting together key concepts in our previous level to help students both anticipate and outplay their opponents general strategies. Among other concepts, in this course, we examine the wide array of advanced tactical and strategic knowledge of our students, and help to develop more advanced and subtle strategies that will help lead them into better endgames.</p>	<p>Chess.com guide: 700–849</p> <p>Best for students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Compete regularly online or in tournaments ✓ Are comfortable with complex positions ✓ Are refining opening preparation and positional understanding <p>Class length: 90 minutes</p> <p>Typical progression: Typically 32 weeks (two semesters)</p> <p>Focus: Advanced planning, accuracy, and tournament readiness</p>
	<h3>Expert 1</h3> <p>Our Expert 1 Level course begins to fully develop our students' opening repertoires and middle game strategies in preparation of real-tournament play. This course focuses on introducing titled-player ideas in strategy and planning as well as developing training regimens for self-improvement. Under CWMS' trademarked systems, students will also begin to develop pro-level thinking as well as tactical motifs.</p>	<p>Chess.com guide: 850–999</p> <p>Best for students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Have strong tactical and positional understanding ✓ Can calculate deeply and accurately ✓ Are committed to long-term competitive improvement <p>Class length: 90 minutes</p> <p>Typical progression: Typically 48 weeks (one full year)</p> <p>Focus: High-level training and disciplined improvement</p>
	<h3>Expert 2</h3> <p>Our Expert 2 Level course continues to push experienced players in their tournaments and competitive play. Through a reverse engineering approach, we examine favorable middlegames from top-level players that can translate smoothly into our students' own games. This course focuses on subtle positional differences in the middle game which can lead to drastically better endgames.</p>	<p>Chess.com guide: 1000–1149</p> <p>Best for students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Play serious competitive chess ✓ Analyze games independently ✓ Are refining advanced concepts and calculation <p>Class length: 90 minutes</p> <p>Typical progression: Typically 48 weeks (one full year)</p> <p>Focus: Precision, consistency, and competitive performance</p>
	<h3>Expert 3</h3> <p>Our Expert 3 Level course continues to push already experienced players with a deeper overall understanding of the opening, middle and endgame. In this course, students will be asked to examine games thoroughly during lecture and provide their teacher with their own games for later analysis. Among other concepts, this course will review and expand on key ideas and strategies, including imbalances in common openings, nuanced differences between opposing pieces and pawn structures.</p>	<p>Chess.com guide: 1150–1299</p> <p>Best for students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Are highly competitive and tournament-focused ✓ Have strong calculation, positional understanding, and discipline ✓ Are preparing for elite-level play <p>Class length: 90 minutes</p> <p>Typical progression: Typically 48 weeks (one full year)</p> <p>Focus: Elite preparation and advanced competitive skills</p>
	<h3>Master</h3> <p>Our Master Level course is built for advanced players aiming to refine their play at the highest level. This course focuses on precise calculation, deep strategic understanding, and advanced opening preparation. Students will analyze complex master-level games, submit their own games for in-depth review, and actively defend their decisions during class. Emphasis is placed on dynamic imbalances, subtle positional advantages, complex pawn structures, and converting small edges into wins.</p>	<p>Chess.com guide: 1300+</p> <p>Best for students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Are highly competitive and ambitious ✓ Regularly play tournaments or high-level online games ✓ Are focused on long-term chess growth and results <p>Class length: 90 minutes</p> <p>Typical progression: Typically 48 weeks (one full year)</p> <p>Focus: Tournament success, advanced preparation, and individualized growth</p>

Still unsure?

That's completely normal – and expected.

We're always happy to:

- ✓ Recommend the right level
- ✓ Adjust placement after the first class if needed
- ✓ Ensure your child feels challenged, confident, and supported