













Article 2: The initial position of the pieces on the chessboard

- 2.1 The chessboard is composed of an 8 x 8 grid of 64 equal squares alternately light (the 'white' squares) and dark (the 'black' squares).
The chessboard is placed between the players in such a way that the near corner square to the right of the player is white.
- 2.2 At the beginning of the game one player has 16 light-coloured pieces (the 'white' pieces); the other has 16 dark-coloured pieces (the 'black' pieces).

These pieces are as follows:

A white king, usually indicated by the symbol	
A white queen, usually indicated by the symbol	
Two white rooks, usually indicated by the symbol	
Two white bishops, usually indicated by the symbol	
Two white knights, usually indicated by the symbol	
Eight white pawns, usually indicated by the symbol	
A black king, usually indicated by the symbol	
A black queen, usually indicated by the symbol	
Two black rooks, usually indicated by the symbol	
Two black bishops, usually indicated by the symbol	
Two black knights, usually indicated by the symbol	
Eight black pawns, usually indicated by the symbol	

- 2.3 The initial position of the pieces on the chessboard is as follows:



2.4 The eight vertical columns of squares are called 'files'. The eight horizontal rows of squares are called 'ranks'. A straight line of squares of the same colour, running from one edge of the board to an adjacent edge, is called a 'diagonal'.

Note: This is an excerpt from the FIDE Handbook. For actual handbook click [here](#)