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## 5 Great Chess Books For Beginners

pete  | Dec 1, 2014 | 12410 views | 48 comments

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Like it or not, holiday gift-shopping season is now upon us, at least according to the ubiquitous calendar of commerce.

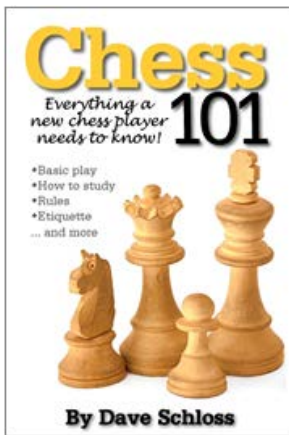
Instead of being trampled by unruly deal-seekers at big box retail stores, you can shop online and still get something thoughtful for the chess beginner on your list.

For our list, we polled the Chess.com content team for its choice of the best chess books for beginners.

Let us know which beginner books you recommend in the comments and on [Facebook](#).



### 1. Chess 101 by Dave Schloss



Selected by [IM Daniel Rensch](#).

Author Dave Schloss describes *Chess 101* as a self-contained beginner's chess course.

The book offers everything a complete beginner would need to know to play the game, from topics as basic as the board and pieces, to the structure and rules of chess tournaments.

It also includes sections on how to study chess and tips for winning your first games.

"The moment I opened *Chess 101*, I knew Dave had accomplished something great: a truly simple guide to learning and enjoying the game," said IM Daniel Rensch, who selected this book.

"Many attempt this feat, but few beginner chess manuals really succeed in keeping things simple while highlighting the best parts of the game of chess," said Rensch.


### 2. Bobby Fischer Teaches Chess by Bobby Fischer and Stuart Margulies

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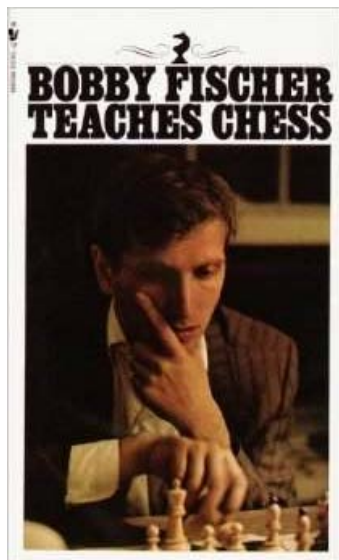


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Selected by [IM Daniel Rensch](#).

This paperback, also recommended by IM Rensch, is one of the best-selling chess books of all time.

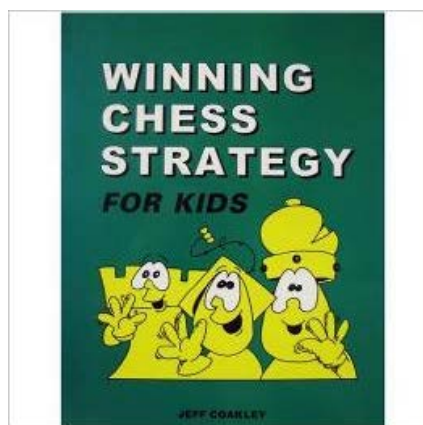
Fischer's beginner book focuses on teaching tactics via "programmed instruction," which asks the student to actively answer questions on every page.

*Bobby Fischer Teaches Chess* crams so many tactical positions into the course that when you think you've reached the end, you can turn the book around and read back-to-front for more tactical problems printed on the opposite pages.

"This book was one of the first experiences I had learning the game of chess," said IM Rensch.

"Later," said Rensch, "I realized it was truly one-of-a-kind, in that it was the first 'beginner's book' written by a world champion! Fischer's approach is simple, yet innovative and deep. It takes the right steps towards building the fundamentals of a strong chess player!"

### 3. [Winning Chess Strategies for Kids](#) by Jeff Coakley



Selected by [FM Mike Klein](#).

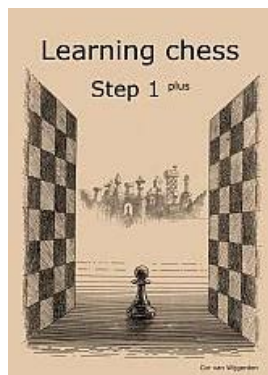
Designed for children 7 to 13 years old, *Winning Chess Strategy* is part of a series of beginner workbooks by Jeff Coakley.

The workbook starts with the rules of chess and quickly progresses to strategic ideas like opening principles and piece development.

It also includes sections on tactical combinations, endgame technique, and middlegame planning.

“Nothing beats the workbooks by Jeff Coakley,” according to FM Mike Klein, who said they were “used a ton” when he was teaching children chess.

## 4. **The Steps Method** by Rob Brunia and Cor van Wijgerden



Selected by [CM Peter Doggers](#).

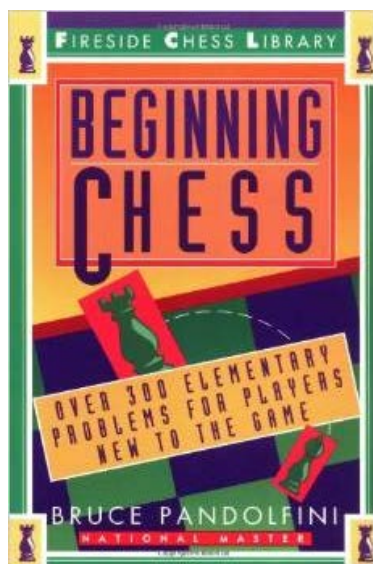
*The Steps Method* is really a full beginner’s chess course, featuring six training manuals and 20 workbooks. The course and books were developed from material by two Dutch chess teachers.

*The Steps* have been used primarily in Europe to teach children to play, but the course is “gaining popularity throughout the world,” according to its publisher. Of the 27 total books available in the course, 26 have been translated to English.

The course is based, obviously, on a step-by-step program to build one level of chess learning on previously mastered material. The books urge teachers not to proceed to the next lesson until “the student can use the material in his games regularly.”

CM Peter Doggers, also from the Netherlands, recommends the course, calling it “pretty good stuff.”

## 5. **Beginning Chess** by Bruce Pandolfini



Selected by [Pete](#).

National Master Bruce Pandolfini is a [columnist for Chess.com](#) and [ChessKid.com](#), but he is also well known for his bibliography of chess books aimed at beginning and intermediate players.

*Beginning Chess* includes an introduction on the rules of the game before proceeding to the heart of its material, more than 300 instructional chess problems.

Pandolfini offers a scoring system for the student, who can rank his or her progress and results on a graded scale of categories from beginner to master class.

In my opinion, the best part of *Beginning Chess* is how easy it is to pick up and do a few problems without needing a lot of time to sit down and study. It's the perfect book for busy beginners who want to improve in their spare time.

## Free Bonus: ChessKid.com Curriculum



Unlike the books listed above, the *ChessKid Curriculum* is completely free – just [download](#) and start reading, or print the lessons for easy reference.

Designed by IM Daniel Rensch, the curriculum includes diagrams, worksheets and mini-games to teach chess concepts through practice.

The curriculum also offers advice for coaches or parents on how to most effectively teach their chess students.

What are your favorite beginner's chess books? Let us know in the comments.

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Ziryab 🐾 🇺🇸

4 days ago

I wrote a long piece about my first chess book, but I don't recommend that book over the five listed here even though it revolutionized my chess by taking me from a rank beginner with no skills to a young player able to beat all of his friends.

You can read my story at <http://chessskill.blogspot.com/2012/03/my-first-chess-book.html>

Here's the beginning:

19 March 2012

### **My First Chess Book**

#### *Lesson of the Week: Value of Books*

There is a story that I like to tell, an autobiographical story that explains the source of

my chess skill. My intent is to motivate aspiring chess students (and their parents) to delve into the world of chess books. This world becomes harder to promote as electronic substitutes grow in quality, diversity, and availability. But it remain a world of value.



My story concerns how my little sister taught me the moves of chess after learning the game from the neighbors. I was in second grade; she was in first. For the next several years, chess was one of the games that we played like Parcheesi or Monopoly. None of us were skilled. Being the oldest, I won more than my share and was able to maintain the self-deception that I understood the game. Then, in Junior High (they call it Middle School now), I was visiting a friend and saw that he had a chess book: *Chess in 30 Minutes*. "Wow," I told him, "You have a book about chess, you must be pretty good." We determined through the course of a game or two that he was no worse than me, and maybe a little better.



archibald287 🇪🇸

4 days ago

I learned the rules of chess by reading Fischer's book. And I will never regret this... 😊



dashkee94 🇺🇸

4 days ago

My first book was *The Complete Chess Course* by Fred Reinfeld. I still have it.



uncopyrightables 🌐

4 days ago

My first chess book was "How To Be A Winner At Chess" by Fred Reinfeld



Rishi9 💎 🇮🇳

4 days ago

In India, Your First Move by Sokolosky is very popular for beginners. Mine says published by Raduga, who seem to publishers during the soviet era. It will be available on abebooks.

Fred Reinfeld was a popular chess author. It is now 50 yrs since his passing, so copyrights might not be applicable. Any attempts to convert his books to algebraic (on kindle) maybe selections from his writings ?



horatiocar02112 🇺🇸

4 days ago

@DrFrank124c chesscafe.com is now behind a walled garden.



livinchuk 🇷🇺

5 days ago

"Tratado General de Ajedrez" by Roberto Grau is the bible of chess. -



Bobbarooski 🇺🇸

5 days ago

My first chess book was *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Chess* by Patrick Wolff, and it was good. The Jeff Coakley book listed by Pete is excellent. Dan Heisman recommended it for my son a few years ago, and it turned to the perfect book for him.



SunburstStrat  

5 days ago

After reading 4 chess books, it's time for My System by Nimzovitch.



Shreyasbhatt9181 

5 days ago

Thanks for info



Ziryab  

5 days ago

After working with Pandolfini's *Beginning Chess* and a couple of young players a few years ago, I developed a strong conviction concerning the of simple tactics problems with ten pieces or fewer. That's a distinctive element of *Beginning Chess*. That has become a central component of my own teaching.

I heartily endorse this recommendation.



horatiocar02112 

5 days ago

I would also +1 Chess Fundamentals by J R Capablanca. Though a bit advanced, Capa's advice is invaluable. Be careful with the edition- make sure you don't pick the one that Nick deFirmian messed up.



Carapaima 

5 days ago

Good Morning....

V.N. Panov: "Elemental Chess". A Great book for beginners.



CabassoG  

5 days ago

The Soviet Chess Primer as someone recommended is excellent. I know a few people (who speak Russian, oh the giant Russian population in Fair Lawn) who have used this book before.



Jurgan 

5 days ago

Play Winning Chess by Yasser Seirawan. Well, the whole series is good (especially Tactics), but that's the beginning one. Once you graduate from those, Jeremy Silman's books are next, especially Reassess Your Chess.



QueenSnifferOne  

5 days ago

The Steps Method Books really are the best. Not just for Kids!!! It's the Book for Players that believe chess is 99% Tactics. It categorizes all of the different types. Super recommendable. For Players Elo 500 - 2150.



DrFrank124c 

5 days ago

For those of you who have been asking for books for intermediate players I think the best ones are Dan Heisman's books, if you are unable to buy those books you can go to Chess Cafe and read Heisman's blogs or you can go to ICC and watch his videos. I've been watching those videos on ICC and they are incredible. I'm not a master, just a mister but as an intermediate player my games have improved by watching those videos alone. The thing I like about Heiman is that he doesn't just go over the moves and variations, he explains the thought process he uses to find the best move. When you go beyond the basics that every beginner must know, tactics, openings, endgames you must learn to improve your thought process in order to progress in chess.



Leole 

5 days ago

First book I ever read on Chess were "Checkmate!my first chess book" by Gary Kasparov



Leole

5 days ago

Two great books of chess puzzle:

"The Manual of Chess Combination" 1 and 2 by Sergey Ivaschenko

"The Art of Combinnation" by M.V.Blokh



bgianis

5 days ago

### [Chess for Beginners: A Picture Guide Including Photographs and Diagrams for Self-Teaching](#)

The book contains photos of a real board accompanied with diagrams and helps beginners to understand the moves of pieces s well as basic rules castling, stalemate, underpromotion, draw. It also contains tips about strategy, tactics, openings and endgames.

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