

S	歩	歩	C	歩
L	歩	歩	歩	H
歩	歩	O	歩	歩
歩	U	歩	歩	歩
歩	歩	歩	G	歩
歩	I	歩	歩	B

Shogi is known as the "Japanese Chess" or "Game of Generals" in which you will find yourself playing with lances, dragons, castles, kings...

It has a history that can be traced back over 1000 years.

Though it has many features you will also see in traditional Chess, it is more challenging; something that we enjoy a lot :)

In our club, we often find that cake and tea goes very well with the game!

In Shōgi, once players capture an opponent's piece, they can reuse that piece as their own—meaning that while Chess games on the whole get simpler as fewer pieces are left on the board, Shōgi games tend to get even more complex!

We started the club at the EJCA only in 2022! We focus on exploring the game together, playing Shōgi on- and offline, and most importantly: on having a great time.

Join us!

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Shogi – Getting Started

Players: Shogi is for two players who sit on opposite sides of the board and make alternate moves. The players are called Black (Sente) and White (Gote). Black moves first.

Board: The board (ban) is usually made of wood, and is nine squares by nine. The three ranks (rows) furthest from each player are regarded as that player's promotion zone.

Pieces: The pieces (koma) are usually made of wood and are flat and pointed. Both player's pieces are exactly the same and the two players shows which are their pieces by pointing them towards the opposing player (see diagram).

Each player starts with **one King, one Rook, one Bishop, two Golds, two Silvers, two Knights, two Lances and nine Pawns**. The diagrams below show the pieces – the **boldfaced** letter is used for that piece in game records.



Each piece has two characters (kanji). The top character is the one that is normally used in Shogi diagrams.

Sometimes, characters on the pieces and characters in the diagrams aren't exactly the same as shown above. This is because in Japan, many different calligraphic styles are used for both Shogi pieces, and for Shogi diagrams.

Initial set up: The next diagram shows the set-up at the start of a game of Shogi, using a single character, as mentioned above. In Shogi diagrams, **Black is at the bottom of the board**, White at the top. Blacks pieces point 'up' the board, and Whites pieces point 'down' the board.

1

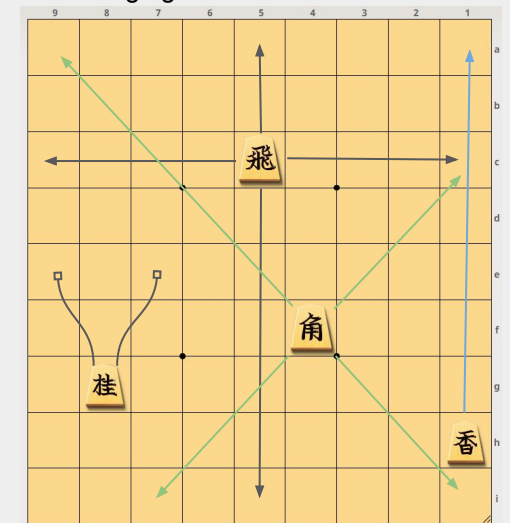
White (Gote)



Black (Sente)

The numbers and letters at the top of the files and the right of the rows (or ranks) are used for recording games. For example, the Black King is on 5i; the White Rook is on 8b.

Moves: The next two diagrams show the moves of all the pieces. In the first, the → lines indicate that pieces may move any number of squares in the direction(s) shown, but they may **not** jump over any piece, or land on a square already occupied by a piece belonging to the same side.



Books: A few books – all are good for new players: 1. and 2. include a selection of tsume-shogi, and complete games with commentary. 3. is a comparison of Chess, Shogi, Go (Weichi) and Chinese Chess (Xiang-chi).

1. Shogi for Beginners, John Fairbairn, The Ishi Press, 1989, 4-87187-201-7. (<http://en.aobo-shop.com/>)
2. The Art of Shogi, Tony Hosking, The Shogi Foundation, 1997. (<http://www.shogifoundation.co.uk/>)
3. 4 Great Games, Tony Hosking, The Shogi Foundation, 1998, 0-9531089-1-0.
4. Tsume Puzzles for Japanese Chess, T Gene Davis, 2011, 146369055X. (<https://www.amazon.co.uk/>)

Two free Shogi books on the internet:

- 1) [A Brief Introduction To Shogi](#), Roger Hare. Regularly updated.
- 2) [Introduction to Handicap Play](#), Larry Kaufman (ed. Roger Hare). Download both from <http://eric.macshogi.com>.

A free Shogi computer program: Shogidokoro is a free computer program (MS Windows only), which comes with a single 'engine' which will give new players a good game. You can load stronger 'engines' into the program for a better game. <http://shogidokoro.starfree.jp/download.html>

Google Drive Shogi Archive: Roger Hare's archive of Shogi material. Includes: A Basic Introduction to Shogi, documents on handicap Shogi, Shogi openings, tsumeshogi, DIY Shogi sets, and much, much more... https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1csxZKVDKCAKnbt0-pInodsbcF_h0a9a

Online Resources: Lishogi, <https://lishogi.org/>, Canadian Discord Server (<discord.gg/dvEhJnk>), 81Dojo (<https://81dojo.com>)

Acknowledgement: This hand-out is based on a leaflet published by the late George Hodges in the 1970s, and additions by Roger Hare (rjhare@outlook.com), February 2020.

A very short game: To introduce Shogi notation please work out how the notation works from this very short (and very unlikely!) game. It's the Shogi equivalent of the 'Fools Mate' in conventional Chess. **Remember:** Black (Sente) moves first, and moves are usually numbered individually (unlike Chess where they are numbered in pairs).

1 P7f 2 G7b | 5 +Bx4b 6 K6a
3 Bx3c+ 4 G4b | 7 G*5b mate

'3 Bx3c+' means '(Black) Bishop takes the (White) piece on 3c and promotes'. '5 +Bx4b' means 'promoted (Black) Bishop takes the (White) piece on 4b', '7 G*5b' means 'Black drops a (previously captured) Gold on 5b'. 'x' means 'takes' or 'captures', '+' means 'promotes' or 'promoted'. '*' means 'drops on'. Play the game through to see what happens. The game record is known as a **kifu**.

Here's another very short (and equally unlikely!) game:

1 P7f 2 P8d | 7 P5e 8 Px5e
3 P5f 4 P5d | 9 Bx5e 10 P8e
5 R5h 6 S4b | 11 Bx7c+ mate

Play the game through to see what happens.

Shogi strategy and tactics: Shogi games have three phases: opening, middle-game and end-game. In the **opening**, it is usual to (1) build a **castle** (gakoi) to protect the King before (or at the same time as); (2) developing an **attack**. The dual procedure is often referred to as a **joseki**. There are **many 'standard' castles and joseki**. In the endgame, a knowledge of how to achieve check-mate is useful, so you are advised to study **tsume-shogi** problems (see later). Shogi games fall into one of four categories: (1) **Ranging Rook vs. Static Rook**; (2) **Static Rook vs. Ranging Rook**; (3) **Ranging Rook vs. Ranging Rook** and (4) **Static Rook vs. Static Rook**. Different strategies (castles and joseki) are used for each of the four types of game. It's a good idea to become familiar with at least a couple of the standard castles and joseki. **Handicap play:** Unlike in Chess, handicapping works well in Shogi. **Tsume-shogi:** Tsume-shogi are the Shogi equivalent of Chess mating problems and are useful for developing endgame skills.

3. The promoted Bishop may additionally move one square up, down, left or right.
4. The Gold and King do not promote. If a player elects not to promote a piece when it enters the promotion zone, the piece **may** subsequently be promoted when moving into, or wholly or partly within the promotion zone. Once a piece has been promoted, it retains that promoted status **until it is captured** by the opposing player.

When a Pawn or Lance reaches the last rank, or when a Knight reaches the last, or next to last rank, promotion is **compulsory**. If this were not so, the piece concerned would no longer have a legal move.

Capture: When a piece is moved onto a square occupied by one of the opponent's pieces, that piece is captured and removed from the board. Captured pieces are kept at the right hand side of the capturing player, in full view of the opponent.

Drops: Subject to certain restrictions, **captured pieces may be re-used by the capturing player**, in lieu of a conventional move by dropping them on any vacant square on the board.

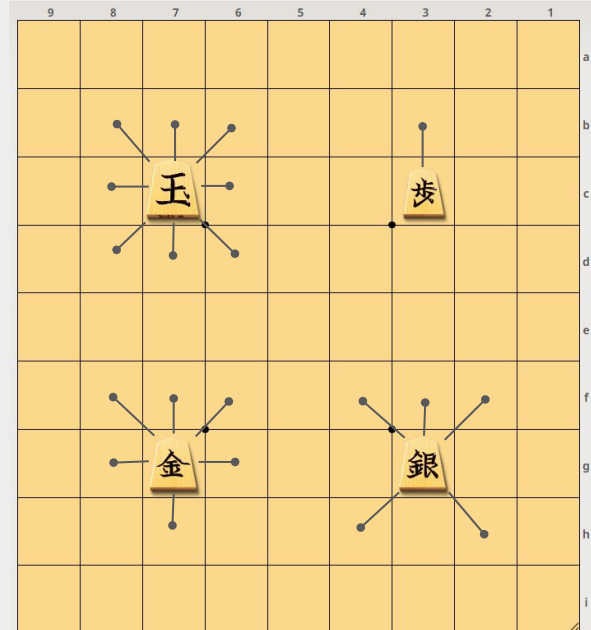
- Those **restrictions** are:
1. Pieces are dropped in the unpromoted state.
 2. Dropped pieces may subsequently be promoted in the normal way when making a move wholly or partly within the promotion zone.
 3. A piece cannot be dropped on a square from which it does not have a legal move (eg: a Pawn or Lance on the last rank, or a Knight on either of the two last ranks).
 4. A Pawn may not be dropped on a file on which there is an unpromoted Pawn belonging to the same side.
 5. A Pawn cannot be dropped directly in front of the King, to give check-mate.

Object: The object of the game is to capture the enemy King. When a King cannot avoid being captured on the next move it is said to be 'check-mated', and the game is a win for the capturing side.

Notes for Chess players: Draws **may not** be arrived at by 'mutual agreement' (and in any case, draws are rare in Shogi). Stalemate **cannot** occur. The **Pawn** captures only in the direction in which it moves. There is **no composite castling** move – castles are built 'step-by-step'.

The Knight moves two squares forward and one square to right or left – that's the ↗ in the diagram. The Knight is the **only** piece which may **jump** over other pieces.

In the next diagram, the → lines indicate that the pieces may move only **one** square in the direction(s) shown:



It should be clear from the previous two diagrams that the Knight, Lance and Pawn may **not** move backwards.

Promotion: When a piece reaches its promotion zone (the furthest-away **three** ranks), it may be promoted. To do this, simply turn the piece over to reveal the characters indicating its promoted status. This is what the promoted pieces look like on the board:



The characters on the promoted pieces are often **red**. Promoted pieces may also be shown in **red** in diagrams.

1. The **Pawn, Lance, Knight and Silver when promoted** move exactly like a **Gold** (lower left in the previous diagram).
2. The **promoted Rook**, may additionally move **one** square in any of the four diagonal directions.