

Library chess session in 25 minutes

A self-serve activity for November International Games Month

A self-serve session for adult beginners and returning players who know how the pieces move. Pause at one decision, compare an idea and leave with one habit to try next time. International Games Month runs throughout November. [1]

Set up with what you already have

- One chess set per pair, paper and pencils. A participant can bring a finished game, but none is required.
- Print page 2 for each table and page 3 for each participant. Page 4 contains optional app notes and invitation copy.
- Optional: an iPhone or iPad with Pawnpetal already installed. No device, app, account or purchase is needed for the paper activity.

The 25 minute plan

0-3 min	Settle in Choose paper-and-board or an optional device. Agree who moves first and whether you want to talk through ideas.
3-8 min	Find one decision Replay a moment from a finished game, or start a friendly practice game from the normal starting position.
8-16 min	Compare ideas Pause at a move worth discussing. Say what you expect, suggest an alternative and try a short legal continuation.
16-22 min	Reflect privately Complete the one-loss worksheet. If there was no loss, use a surprising or uncertain decision instead.
22-25 min	Choose a next step Share one habit if you wish. Keep the worksheet; there is no score, required feedback or sign-up.

Host note: times are guides, not a test. Offer extra time, larger-print copies or spoken responses. If the piece moves are new, begin with a rules introduction instead. Follow local device and safeguarding policies.

Try one decision together

You can use a chessboard and these pages. The app is entirely optional.

1 Choose a route 3 minutes

Use a physical board, or an already-installed chess app on a device you are comfortable sharing. Work with a partner or think aloud on your own. Agree to pause and discuss rather than race. No chess clock is needed.

2 Choose a moment 5 minutes

If you have a finished game, replay a move you did not understand. Otherwise, start a friendly game from the normal starting position. You do not need to finish it. Pause when you feel unsure or notice something unexpected.

3 Compare two ideas 8 minutes

Before moving, answer these questions in your own words:

- What do I want this move to do?
- What might my opponent do in reply?
- What is one other legal move I could consider?

Try a short continuation for each idea. Put the pieces back before comparing the next line. Use a note or private photo to remember the position if helpful. Do not assume an alternative is better just because it is different.

If a rule is unclear, pause and check it with a knowledgeable player or the library's chess rules reference. Do not turn an uncertain line into an answer key.

4 Write one useful lesson 6 minutes

Use the worksheet on page 3. Short answers, drawings or a spoken reflection are all fine. "I am not sure yet" is a useful answer. Choose one decision, not every mistake in the game.

5 Choose your next habit 3 minutes

Finish this sentence: "Before my next move, I will check..." You may share it with your partner, keep it private or return to it next time you play.

A useful example of a habit: "Before I move, I will look for pieces my opponent can capture." This is a thinking prompt, not a claim that any particular move is correct.

No lost game available? Use the same questions for a practice game or a move that surprised you. You do not need to lose a game to take part.

One loss reflection worksheet

Choose one decision to understand. No name, result or account is required.

Use your own finished game. If you have no lost game, use an uncertain or surprising move from a practice game. Keep this sheet; you do not need to hand it in.

Move or position I want to revisit

1 What did I want my move to achieve?

Describe your idea before you knew the reply.

2 What could my opponent do?

Include a check, capture or threat you noticed. It is fine to be unsure.

3 What alternative would I like to test?

Write a move, describe a plan or sketch it. Check that the move is legal.

4 What happened when I tried it?

Record what you actually saw. If you did not test it, write "not tested".

5 What will I check next time?

Choose one observable habit, rather than a target rating or a result.

Keep this page for your next game. Sharing your answers is optional.

Optional Pawnpetal use

The paper activity is complete on its own. Players choose whether to use an app.

Pawnpetal Chess is made by Gal Itach. Its iPhone and iPad listing describes 72 free lessons, daily puzzles, offline bots, same-device play and game review. Core play, lessons and daily puzzles are free and ad-free; optional permanent cosmetics cost extra. There are no subscriptions. [2]

It requires iOS or iPadOS 18.0 or later. Local play and lessons do not require a Pawnpetal account. Downloading uses the App Store and may require an Apple Account, internet and available storage. Check the current App Store listing and library policy before installing. [2]

If the app is already available, choose a local game or lesson and use the same discussion prompts. Game Center play requires internet and is not needed here. Do not sign anyone into a shared device for this activity. The kit does not rely on Apple Intelligence or a specific app button sequence.

Open the official Pawnpetal App Store listing

Invitation copy for a host to adapt

Spend 25 minutes exploring one chess decision. Use a library chessboard, compare ideas with a partner and leave with one habit to try in your next game. Bring a past game if you like; no game record, device or app is required. An optional Pawnpetal route is available for those who already use it.

Add the confirmed library name, date, time, location, intended age group and any access or booking details before sharing. Do not advertise an event until the host has confirmed it. The copy is a draft, not an event announcement.

Sources and scope

[1] ALA Games and Gaming Round Table. International Games Month. The initiative runs throughout November.

<https://games.ala.org/international-games-month/>

[2] Apple App Store. Pawnpetal Chess, Apple ID 6811392880. Product facts checked 24 October 2026; store copy is not independent runtime testing.

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/pawnpetal-chess-play-learn/id6811392880>

This independent resource was prepared by Valorem, the developer of Pawnpetal. It is not an ALA publication, partnership or endorsement. The session contains no supplied chess puzzles or answer keys and makes no claims about classroom testing, learning gains or accessibility certification.