

Naming the Squares

Chess

The coordinate system, and the colour rule that helps you visualise.

Files a–h run left to right from White's viewpoint; ranks 1–8 run away from White. Every square is a letter plus a number, always given in that order.

SQUARES

64

LIGHT / DARK

32 each

CENTRE

d4 d5 e4 e5

- a1 is dark; h1 is light.
- If the file letter and rank number are both odd or both even, the square is dark.
- White's back rank is 1; Black's is 8.
- The centre squares are d4, d5, e4 and e5.
- The long diagonals are a1–h8 and a8–h1.
- Naming squares aloud speeds calculation considerably.

LOOK FOR IT

e4 is light. e is the 5th letter (odd) and 4 is even, so the square is light.

Being able to name a square's colour without looking is a genuine calculation aid, especially in bishop endgames.