

Torus Chess — Beginner Level

Coach Lesson Plans: Week-by-Week Curriculum

For coach use — one plan per 60-minute class. Rhythm: Warm-Up (5 min), Core Lesson (15 min), Puzzle Practice (15 min), Free Play (20 min), Wrap-Up (5 min). Teach exactly one new idea per week. Ages 5–10 | Target: 600 Elo.

Every class opens in-story: Mariposa the butterfly delivers the week's quest. Praise effort and thinking out loud, never just results. Send the matching Weekly Parent Sheet home after class.

Realm 1: Pawn Village (Weeks 1–6)

Week 1 — The Kingdom and the Board

Objective: Students can name any square (files, ranks, coordinates) and set up the board correctly.

Warm-Up (5 min): Mariposa's tale of the Kingdom of 64 Realms; students "fly" over a giant demo board naming landmarks.

Core Lesson (15 min): Files a–h, ranks 1–8, square names, "light on the right," "queen on her own color."

Puzzle Practice (15 min): Coordinate treasure hunt — coach calls squares, students race to touch them; then reverse roles.

Free Play (20 min): Board setup races in pairs; fastest correct setup earns a star.

Homework: Worksheet: label 10 squares, circle 3 setup mistakes in printed diagrams.

Coach Notes: Do not introduce piece movement yet; mastery of geography prevents confusion later.

Week 2 — The Rook and the Bishop

Objective: Students move rooks and bishops legally and understand the bishop's fixed color.

Warm-Up (5 min): Story: the Rook is the castle tower on rails; the Bishop glides on colored rivers.

Core Lesson (15 min): Rook straight lines, bishop diagonals; demonstrate that a bishop never changes square color.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): Maze Runner boards — reach a coin in the fewest moves past pawn "walls."

Free Play (20 min): Rook-and-bishop-only mini-games: capture all opposing pawns first.

Homework: Worksheet: draw every square a rook and a bishop attack from given posts.

Coach Notes: Expect diagonal drift onto wrong colors; correct gently by asking "did your bishop change rivers?"

Week 3 — The Queen and the Knight

Objective: Students move the queen and knight legally; knights may jump over pieces.

Warm-Up (5 min): Story: the Queen combines tower and river powers; the Knight is the leaping pony.

Core Lesson (15 min): Queen = rook + bishop; knight's L-shape shown as "one-two-turn"; count the 8 knight squares from the center.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): Knight Hops — visit marked squares in order; queens collect scattered coins in fewest moves.

Free Play (20 min): Queen-vs-knights capture games with mixed pawns.

Homework: Worksheet: mark all legal knight moves from 6 positions.

Coach Notes: The knight takes weeks to sink in — normalize this out loud to the class.

Week 4 — The King and the Pawn

Objective: Students move the king and pawn legally, including the two-square first move and promotion.

Warm-Up (5 min): Story: the careful King takes one royal step; Pawns are the brave marching villagers.

Core Lesson (15 min): King one step any direction; pawn forward moves, diagonal captures, promotion at the last rank.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): "Can the pawn capture?" flash cards; promotion race diagrams.

Free Play (20 min): Pawn Wars — 8 pawns each, first to promote wins. Teach it well; it is the year's staple home game.

Homework: Worksheet: pawn capture/promotion puzzles; play Pawn Wars at home twice.

Coach Notes: Reinforce that pawns never move backward and never capture straight ahead.

Week 5 — Captures and Piece Values

Objective: Students state piece values (1/3/3/5/9) and judge captures by counting attackers and defenders.

Warm-Up (5 min): Story: the village market — every piece has a treasure price.

Core Lesson (15 min): Point values; the "Doggy-pile calculator": count attackers vs. defenders before capturing.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): "Good trade, bad trade, fair trade?" cards with mixed positions.

Free Play (20 min): Full-piece capture games (no checkmate yet) scored by points captured.

Homework: Worksheet: 10 trade-evaluation puzzles.

Coach Notes: Insist students say the values aloud when trading; verbalizing builds the habit.

Week 6 — Boss Battle: The Board Guardian

Objective: Consolidate Realm 1: squares, setup, all piece moves, captures, and values.

Warm-Up (5 min): Mariposa announces the Board Guardian has appeared at the village gate.

Core Lesson (15 min): Rapid-fire review stations: setup, movement, values.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): Boss Battle quiz — coach in costume asks each student a ladder of questions.

Free Play (20 min): Celebration games of the students' favorite station activity.

Homework: None — celebrate! Award the **Pearl Shard** and the rank of **Pawn Apprentice**.

Coach Notes: No child "fails" — those who wobble get a private retry next week ("the Guardian offers a rematch").

Realm 2: The Castle Gates (Weeks 7–12)

Week 7 — Castling: The King's Secret Tunnel

Objective: Students castle correctly on both sides and state the three legality conditions.

Warm-Up (5 min): Story: the king's secret tunnel into the castle keep.

Core Lesson (15 min): King slides two squares, rook jumps over; illegal if either piece has moved, the king is in check, or crosses an attacked square.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): "Can the king castle here — yes or no?" inspector cards.

Free Play (20 min): Games where both players must castle within 10 moves.

Homework: Worksheet: 8 castling legality puzzles.

Coach Notes: Physically require king-first movement so tournament habits form early.

Week 8 — En Passant and Special Pawn Rules

Objective: Students execute en passant and know it is only legal immediately.

Warm-Up (5 min): Story: the sneaky villager slipping past the guard "in passing."

Core Lesson (15 min): En passant mechanics and timing; promotion review including underpromotion to a knight.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): En passant yes/no diagrams; "what should this pawn become?" promotion choices.

Free Play (20 min): Pawn Wars, expert edition — en passant allowed.

Homework: Worksheet: en passant and promotion puzzles; teach the rule to a parent.

Coach Notes: The rule is fragile knowledge — revisit it in warm-ups for the next three weeks.

Week 9 — Check: Attacking the King

Objective: Students recognize and announce check, and know a checked king must be rescued immediately.

Warm-Up (5 min): Story: alarm bells in the castle — the king is under attack!

Core Lesson (15 min): What check is; finding all checks in a position; you may never ignore check or move into it.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): Check Detective — find every possible check in set positions.

Free Play (20 min): Games where students must announce "check" aloud correctly.

Homework: Worksheet: circle the checking moves in 10 diagrams.

Coach Notes: Catch and correct "silent checks" immediately; announcing builds awareness.

Week 10 — Escaping Check: Capture, Block, or Run

Objective: Students find all escapes from check using Capture, Block, or Run, and pick the best.

Warm-Up (5 min): Story: three secret doors out of danger.

Core Lesson (15 min): The three and only three escapes; knight checks can never be blocked.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): Escape Room positions — list every escape, then choose the best one.

Free Play (20 min): Games with a "name your escape" rule when checked.

Homework: Worksheet: 10 escape puzzles labeled C, B, or R.

Coach Notes: Weaker scanners should physically point to attacker, path, and flight squares.

Week 11 — Checkmate vs. Stalemate

Objective: Students reliably distinguish checkmate (win) from stalemate (draw).

Warm-Up (5 min): Story: the sleeping king — wake him wrongly and the battle ends in a truce.

Core Lesson (15 min): Definitions side by side; the "is the king attacked?" first question; why stalemate is only a draw.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): "Mate or Not?" — declare Checkmate!, Stalemate!, or Just check! in dramatic voices.

Free Play (20 min): Endgame-position games starting from near-mate setups.

Homework: Worksheet: 10 mate-or-stalemate diagrams.

Coach Notes: This is the most-failed concept at scholastic level; over-teach it happily.

Week 12 — Mini-Boss: The Gatekeeper of the Castle

Objective: Consolidate Realm 2: castling, en passant, checks, escapes, mate vs. stalemate.

Warm-Up (5 min): The Gatekeeper blocks the gates of the Castle of Kings.

Core Lesson (15 min): Obstacle-course review stations for each rule.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): Gatekeeper's challenge quiz per student.

Free Play (20 min): Full games applying all special rules.

Homework: None — award the **Gatekeeper's Key**.

Coach Notes: Log each student's weakest station for targeted warm-ups in Realm 3.

Realm 3: The Castle of Kings (Weeks 13–22)

Week 13 — The Queen's Force-Field Box

Objective: Students shrink the enemy king's space with the queen a knight's-move away, without stalemating.

Warm-Up (5 min): Story: the queen casts a shrinking force-field around the fleeing king.

Core Lesson (15 min): The box method: queen mirrors the king at a knight's distance, never checking, until the king is on the edge.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): Shrink-the-box drills from scattered starting squares.

Free Play (20 min): K+Q vs K races: smallest box in fewest moves.

Homework: Worksheet: draw the next box-shrinking move in 8 positions.

Coach Notes: Ban early checks in drills — checks let the king slip out.

Week 14 — Finishing the King + Queen Mate

Objective: Students deliver the K+Q mate: bring the king up, then mate on the edge.

Warm-Up (5 min): Story: the king marches to help his queen finish the battle.

Core Lesson (15 min): After boxing: walk your king adjacent, then deliver mate; the two standard final patterns.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): Mate-in-one and mate-in-two finishing positions.

Free Play (20 min): Full K+Q vs K games against the clock (target: under 20 moves).

Homework: Worksheet: finish-the-mate puzzles; perform the full mate for a parent.

Coach Notes: Watch for stalemate traps in the corner — connect back to Week 11 loudly.

Week 15 — The Two-Rook Ladder Mate

Objective: Students deliver the two-rook "lawnmower" mate unaided.

Warm-Up (5 min): Story: two tower guards climbing a ladder rung by rung.

Core Lesson (15 min): Alternating rook checks driving the king to the edge; sliding away when attacked.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): Ladder drills from random positions; rescue-the-attacked-rook moments.

Free Play (20 min): K+R+R vs K races in pairs.

Homework: Worksheet: next-ladder-move puzzles.

Coach Notes: Teach the "run away along the rank" rescue before students meet it in games.

Week 16 — Mid-Year Festival!

Objective: Joyful consolidation; every student demonstrates one mastered skill.

Warm-Up (5 min): Mariposa declares the Kingdom's Mid-Year Festival.

Core Lesson (15 min): Student showcase — volunteers teach a favorite concept to the class.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): Team puzzle relay with mixed Realm 1–3 puzzles.

Free Play (20 min): Festival games: Pawn Wars, ladder-mate races, themed mini-games.

Homework: None — festival week.

Coach Notes: Use showcase choices as informal diagnostics of confidence gaps.

Week 17 — Mate in One: Pattern Hunting

Objective: Students spot mate-in-one with every piece type.

Warm-Up (5 min): Story: hunting the kingdom for hidden winning arrows.

Core Lesson (15 min): Systematic scan: checks first, then test each for escape squares.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): Timed mate-in-one sheets (mixed pieces, back rank, support mates).

Free Play (20 min): Games with a "call your mate" bonus star.

Homework: Worksheet: 12 mate-in-one puzzles.

Coach Notes: Require the C-B-R escape check before declaring mate — accuracy over speed.

Week 18 — Stalemate Awareness

Objective: Students avoid stalemating in winning positions and spot stalemate tricks when losing.

Warm-Up (5 min): Story: "Don't Wake the Draw!" — the sleeping draw-dragon in the corner.

Core Lesson (15 min): Common stalemate traps in K+Q endings; giving the defending king a "breathing square."

Puzzle Practice (15 min): "Winning move or stalemate blunder?" decision cards.

Free Play (20 min): Don't Wake the Draw! — win K+Q vs K where stalemate loses you the game point.

Homework: Worksheet: mark the stalemate traps in 8 near-won positions.

Coach Notes: Laughter is the teacher here; celebrate near-misses theatrically.

Week 19 — Hanging Pieces and the Safety Scan

Objective: Students run a before-every-move Safety Scan: "Is anything of mine hanging? Anything of theirs?"

Warm-Up (5 min): Story: leaving the castle gate open — free treasure for thieves.

Core Lesson (15 min): Defended vs. undefended pieces; the two Safety Scan questions before each move.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): Spot-the-hanging-piece speed rounds.

Free Play (20 min): Games where saying the scan aloud earns a star per turn.

Homework: Worksheet: circle every hanging piece in 10 positions.

Coach Notes: This single habit drives most rating growth at this level — enforce it warmly and relentlessly.

Week 20 — Counting Attackers and Defenders

Objective: Students count attackers vs. defenders to judge captures on defended squares.

Warm-Up (5 min): Story: the doggy-pile at the castle gate — who ends up on top?

Core Lesson (15 min): Count attackers, count defenders, compare values in capture order.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): "Safe to take?" counting puzzles with growing piece piles.

Free Play (20 min): Games with a coach spot-check: "count it out loud before you take."

Homework: Worksheet: 8 counting puzzles.

Coach Notes: Keep examples to two or three attackers; deep sequences belong to Intermediate.

Week 21 — First Taste of Tactics: The Double Attack

Objective: Students create simple double attacks (two threats, one move) with queen and knight.

Warm-Up (5 min): Story: the two-headed arrow that strikes two targets.

Core Lesson (15 min): One move, two threats; the opponent can only save one.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): Find-the-double-attack puzzles (queen and knight focus).

Free Play (20 min): Games with a "double attack of the day" bounty.

Homework: Worksheet: 10 double-attack puzzles.

Coach Notes: This is a preview of Detective Forest — plant excitement for the Intermediate level.

Week 22 — Boss Battle: The Checkmate Dragon

Objective: Consolidate Realm 3: both fundamental mates, safety scanning, stalemate avoidance.

Warm-Up (5 min): The Checkmate Dragon guards the Castle of Kings' crown room.

Core Lesson (15 min): Review circuit of the realm's skills.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): Dragon's trial: each student performs K+Q and two-rook mates against the coach.

Free Play (20 min): Victory games.

Homework: None — award the **Sun Shard** and the rank of **Castle Cadet**.

Coach Notes: A clean mate under mild pressure is the pass bar; retries next week as "the Dragon's rematch."

Realm 4: Centerland Plains (Weeks 23–28)

Week 23 — The Center: Heart of the Battlefield

Objective: Students explain why the four center squares matter and fight for them from move one.

Warm-Up (5 min): Story: the hill in the middle of the plains — whoever holds it sees everything.

Core Lesson (15 min): e4/d4/e5/d5; count a knight's moves in the center vs. the corner.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): "Which move fights for the center?" choice cards.

Free Play (20 min): Games scored with bonus stars for central pawn and piece play.

Homework: Worksheet: mark the center-fighting move in 8 openings.

Coach Notes: Keep it concrete: more squares = stronger piece.

Week 24 — The Five Opening Rules

Objective: Students recite and apply the five golden rules of the opening.

Warm-Up (5 min): Story: the Field Scout's code of the plains.

Core Lesson (15 min): 1) Center pawn first, 2) knights before bishops, 3) castle early, 4) don't move the same piece twice, 5) queen stays home early.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): "Which rule was broken?" diagnosis diagrams.

Free Play (20 min): Games judged only on the first 10 moves against the code.

Homework: Worksheet: fix the rule-breaking move in 6 openings.

Coach Notes: Rules are guides, not laws — say so, but enforce them at this level.

Week 25 — The Development Race

Objective: Students develop all minor pieces and castle within the first 10 moves.

Warm-Up (5 min): Story: the army that arrives first wins the plains.

Core Lesson (15 min): Development as a race; counting developed pieces on both sides.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): "Who is winning the race?" position comparisons.

Free Play (20 min): 10-move development sprints scored on pieces out + castled.

Homework: Worksheet: development-count puzzles.

Coach Notes: Penalize early queen wandering with gentle in-story consequences.

Week 26 — A Model Opening: The Italian Game

Objective: Students play the first five moves of the Italian Game for both colors and explain each move's purpose.

Warm-Up (5 min): Story: the ancient map every Field Scout carries.

Core Lesson (15 min): 1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 — each move tied to the five rules; Black's symmetrical replies.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): Move-order memory drills and "why this move?" questions.

Free Play (20 min): All games begin from the Italian tabiya.

Homework: Worksheet: complete the Italian move order; play it at home.

Coach Notes: One model opening only — repertoire building starts at Intermediate.

Week 27 — Defending Against the Scholar's Mate

Objective: Students recognize the four-move mate attempt and defend correctly.

Warm-Up (5 min): Story: the Warlord's favorite ambush on new scouts.

Core Lesson (15 min): Qh5/Qf3 + Bc4 threats against f7; the correct defenses (g6 ideas, Nf6 timing, defending f7).

Puzzle Practice (15 min): "Stop the ambush" defensive puzzles.

Free Play (20 min): Coach plays the Scholar's attack against each student; class defends.

Homework: Worksheet: defend-f7 puzzles; ambush a parent, then teach them the defense.

Coach Notes: Also teach why the attack backfires against good defense — punish, don't just survive.

Week 28 — Boss Battle: The Warlord of Development

Objective: Consolidate Realm 4: center, five rules, development, model opening, Scholar's defense.

Warm-Up (5 min): The Warlord challenges the class to open like champions.

Core Lesson (15 min): Realm review circuit.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): Warlord's trial: each student plays a principled 10-move opening against the coach.

Free Play (20 min): Victory games from the Italian.

Homework: None — award the **Amber Shard** and the rank of **Field Scout**.

Coach Notes: Pass bar: all minors developed, castled, no hanging pieces in 10 moves.

The Trials (Weeks 29–32)

Week 29 — Full Games with the Thinking Checklist

Objective: Students play complete games using the full checklist: Safety Scan → escape checks → opening rules → count before capturing.

Warm-Up (5 min): Mariposa unveils the Trials grounds.

Core Lesson (15 min): Assemble the year's habits into one thinking routine; demonstrate on a live game.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): Mixed review set spanning all realms.

Free Play (20 min): Full serious games with coach observation notes.

Homework: Play two full games at home using the checklist.

Coach Notes: Record each student's checklist gaps to target in Week 30 feedback.

Week 30 — The Beginner Trials

Objective: Formal, friendly assessment across four trials: rules knowledge, checkmating technique, puzzle solving, and a complete principled game.

Warm-Up (5 min): Story: the four trial chambers of the Kingdom.

Core Lesson (15 min): Trials 1–2: rules quiz; K+Q and two-rook mates against the coach.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): Trial 3: mixed puzzle paper (mates, safety, counting).

Free Play (20 min): Trial 4: one complete principled game.

Homework: Rest — the Pearl Cup is next week!

Coach Notes: Score against the 600-Elo profile; students needing time get a 4–8 week bridge plan, never a repeat year.

Week 31 — The Pearl Cup

Objective: Students compete in a celebratory five-round tournament with clocks and full etiquette.

Warm-Up (5 min): Opening ceremony and sportsmanship oath.

Core Lesson (15 min): Clock use, notation of results, handshakes, quiet boards.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): (Folded into rounds.)

Free Play (20 min): Tournament rounds (extend across the session).

Homework: Retell your favorite game to your family.

Coach Notes: Award sportsmanship prizes with the same weight as results.

Week 32 — Awards Ceremony and the Road Ahead

Objective: Celebrate the year, deliver written progress reports, and preview the Intermediate level.

Warm-Up (5 min): Shard display and hero roll-call.

Core Lesson (15 min): Awards; each student receives their written progress report for parents.

Puzzle Practice (15 min): One teaser puzzle from the Detective Forest (a simple fork!).

Free Play (20 min): Celebration games and photos.

Homework: None — promotion to **Intermediate**, where the Detective Forest awaits.

Coach Notes: Hand every parent the report personally with one specific praise point.

