

Dear Parent,

this "gaming platform" can be visited every day or on certain days of the week, for a period of time that does not remove power to the activities already planned and necessary for children (school, sports etc..) but enough to develop their visual skills -space (20/30 minutes a day would be enough). A half hour of play from time to time definitely a possibility of higher learning, because, as we all know, is the main practice that the kids need to learn the game of chess, and above the initial levels, it is essential to then integrate the strategic connections of the game.

The educational system is particularly appropriate for children aged 7 to 11 years , can still be used by anyone, provided with a playful spirit, a desire to learn the rules of chess and practice. It is not aimed at those who already know the game very well, nor to his practice with the absolute goal of competition. The educational games are varied, for each level, are interactive and also to other connected users. The goal is to reach level 11 to start playing the full game (a real chess game), with connected users, or with Victor the cat.

The full game, which is played with a 90-second time limit for each move to user, is facilitated with comments and symbols to facilitate the understanding of the rules of the game by the student.

NB The system is not compatible with the Apple Tablet because they do not support Adobe Flash.

We would like to give you some tips to use it correctly.

Proper use by the children / parents' role

Parents do not need to be familiar with the rules of chess to supervise this activity. They should, however, have some notion of the basic dynamics of the site and its goals, so that they are able to help pupils while surfing, if there is anything they don't immediately understand, and above all to encourage them to adopt the correct approach to this teaching method.

The Home page looks like this.



There are 3 rooms (plus the Home room) in “Victor’s chess house”: a **green** room for lessons, a **yellow** room for playing games and a **purple** one where the final tests are held.

The children always have to follow the same sequence: first they go to the lessons room, then to the games room and last of all to the final tests room. This sequence is repeated 10 times because the course is structured on 10 levels. The children earn individual points during games and the final tests which allow them to move up to the next level. At each level the children learn, practice and are tested on different aspects of the game.

Each time they complete a level they are awarded a cup. They move up to the next level and repeat the sequence from the beginning, i.e. they start by going to the lessons room to learn some new rules of the game. At the end of the lessons they proceed to the games room, to practice what Victor the Cat has taught them. They must complete all the games before moving on to the final tests room for that level.

Before long the children will realise that they only earn points with games and tests, but not with lessons. Some will usually try to move up to the next level as quickly as possible, skipping the lessons and going straight to the games. If that happens they will most likely get stuck, because at some stage it will not be clear to them how to complete the game or pass the test. However, they will generally try to solve the problem on their own, by trial and error, rather than by going to the lesson.

It is very important to prevent such behaviour.

1) Each time a pupil wins a cup, he or she should always start again from the lessons room. Only pupils who win a cup without having to complete the games, and thus before taking the final test, can start the next level from the point where they finished the previous one (this may be the case with the most skilled pupils who make fewer mistakes when playing games). These pupils must complete the games and take the test at the new level before moving on to the lessons in the next level.

2) Pupils must “attend” the lessons in the lessons room each time they are unable to solve one of the final tests.

Pupils can re-take any tests they fail, but only after returning to the lessons room to listen again and try to grasp whatever it was they had not previously understood. After listening another time they can also **play again to practice some more** and then repeat the final test.

Pupils can always repeat any tests they have failed but not those they have passed. If, after several attempts, pupils have difficulty with one particular test, they may skip that test.

“Difficult” tests will never, in any case, represent an obstacle as pupils can still pass the level by earning points in the games.

All lessons and games at all the levels that the pupils have already passed are always available and can be repeated at any time.

3) Text documents are available to help the children understand the rules. These are located in the lessons room and can be accessed from the book-case. They contain summaries of the first 4 lessons (the most important ones because, together, they describe checkmate, which is the main aim of the course). These lessons are, in order: the chessboard and the pieces, the King and the first golden rule, the Rook and the second golden rule, checkmate.

The lessons in text format are the same as those that have already been explained by Victor the Cat. They are a useful aid if the children find some particular aspect hard to understand (and should only be used after listening to the animated explanation).

Useful tips

- The recommended browser is Mozilla Firefox. When testing the system, we found this to work better than Explorer 7 or 8 (the latter work but are slower)

- When playing games, press the F11 key on the keyboard for a full-screen view (with some browsers). Press the F11 key again to return to the normal screen view.
- If the connection is overloaded (pages load too slowly), blank pages and messages such as “page not found” might be displayed: in such cases, try pressing the F5 key on the keyboard to refresh the page and solve the problem. Sometimes, pressing the F5 key (refresh page) can be useful when there seems to be a problem with the site.
- If a pupil accidentally closes the browser, you will have to re-type the <http://progetto1en.scacchiedu.it> address and access the site again using that pupil’s details. All the results, up to the last game that was completed, are saved automatically.
- With interactive games (playing against a friend) the opponent’s game might load slowly. If that is the case, you must wait until the page has loaded completely. If you have to wait more than 60 seconds, press the browser’s back key.

If you require further assistance, please contact info@europechesspromotion.org