

# Turning your hobby into a language learning opportunity


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Ajedrez en inglés, español y alemán  
con Martina Gerdts

Polyglot Gathering Online 2026

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# ¿QUÉ HAGO YO?

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Enseñar español y portugués

Escribir sobre lenguas y ajedrez

Ajedrez: jugar, entrenar a otros, trabajar como árbitra

# LA MISIÓN



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- Combinar el aprendizaje de lenguas con temas del corazón,  
o sea,
- Combinar el trabajo en inglés y español con ajedrez

# ¿POR QUÉ?

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## Problemas típicos de estudiantes

- Falta el tiempo 
- Falta la motivación:  
Dificultades de conectarse con el material
- Falta la conexión con los hablantes 

# ¿FALTA EL TIEMPO?



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## **Solución:**

- Combinar actividades

## **Ejemplo del mundo de ajedrez:**

- Entrenador dice „deberías memorizar más finales“
  - EN: Coach says „you should learn more endgames by heart“
  - DE: Der Trainer sagt: „Du solltest mehr Endspiele auswendiglernen“
- Usar material de ajedrez para el aprendizaje de lenguas

# 2 IN 1: CHESS LEARNING AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Material in target language

“Die kleine Schachschule“ by Jonathan Carlstedt

Bilingual material

Tactic exercises with Stappenmethode books

Material published in several languages



Endgame books by Jesus de la Villa

# NO INTERESTING TOPICS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING MATERIAL?

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## **Solution:**

- Talk about topics you are interested in
- learn about your hobby in target language
- Create your own material

## **Chess examples:**

- Vocabulary list based on chess books in target language
- Writing tasks by writing a blog about chess in target language
- Participate in events in target language about the topic

## Chess in 5 languages (Deutsch – English – Italiano – Español – Português)

Schach – Chess – Scacchi – Ajedrez - Xadrez

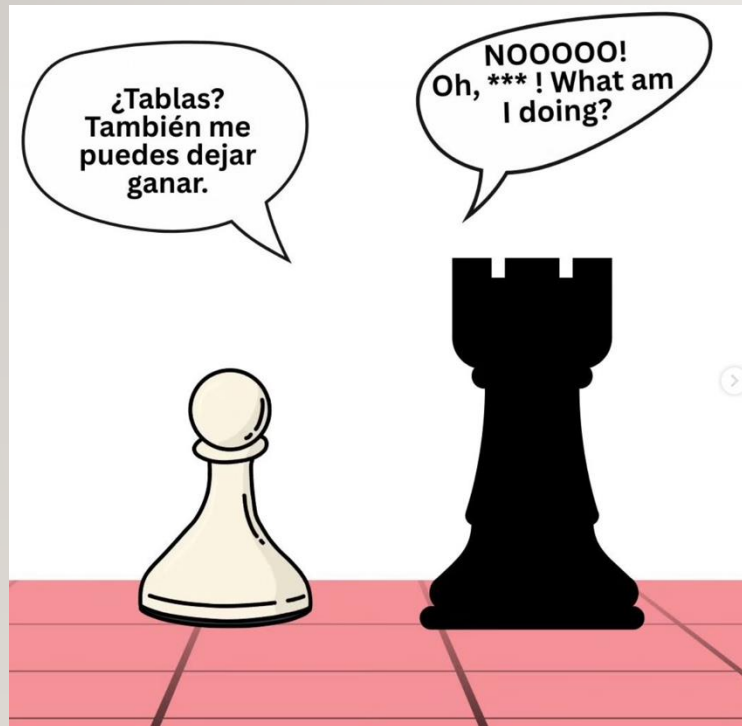
| <b>Figuren</b> | <b>pieces</b>  | <b>pezzi</b>    | <b>piezas</b>      | <b>peças</b>     |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|
|                |                |                 |                    |                  |
| <b>Deutsch</b> | <b>English</b> | <b>Italiano</b> | <b>Español</b>     | <b>Português</b> |
| Dame – D       | Queen – Q      | Donna – D       | Dama (/Reina) – D  | Dama – D         |
| König – K      | King – K       | Re – R          | Rey – R            | Rei – R          |
| Läufer – L     | Bishop – B     | Alfiere – A     | Alfil – A          | Bispo – B        |
| Springer – S   | Knight – N     | Cavallo – C     | Caballo – C        | Cavalo – C       |
| Turm – T       | Rook – R       | Torre – T       | Torre (/Roque) – T | Torre – T        |
| Bauer          | Pawn           | Pedone          | Peón               | Peão             |

# VOCABULARY LISTS: BASIC CHESS TERMS

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Source: <https://martina-gerdts.de/schach/lernmaterial-schach/>

# CREATE YOUR OWN MATERIAL: BILINGUAL CONTENT ON ENDGAMES



Spanish-English Vocabulary list: Understanding pawn vs. rook endgames - Counting moves  
by Martina Gerdts

| Spanish word | English translation (in chess)           | Some thoughts and context   |
|--------------|--|---|
| la torre     | the rook                                 | chess piece   |
| el peón      | the pawn                                 | chess piece   |
| el rey       | the king                                 | chess piece   |
| contar       | to count                                 |   |
| los tiempos  | the tempi                                | aka. "the number of moves necessarily needed"   |
| el bando     | the side/faction/team                    | That sounds like a music band! And it makes me think about "los banditos"! :O   |
| tardar       | to take (in the sense of time, duration) | Context: "15 moves are necessary", "it takes them 5 tempi".   |
| controlar    | to control                               |   |
| la casilla   | the square                               | The chess board has 64 casillas. La casilla is in other contexts a little house (small 'casa') like a hut or a box. -illo/-illa is a Spanish diminutive like -ito/-ita. |

Source: <https://martina-gerdts.de/bilingual-endgames-material/>

# LACK OF CONNECTION TO SPEAKERS?

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How do I get  
introvert Northern  
Germans to talk to  
me???

Wir sagen nur „Moin“, „Moin  
Moin“ wäre schon Plapperei.


# LACK OF CONNECTION TO SPEAKERS?

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## **Solution:**

- Find people with similar interests


## **Chess examples:**

- Introvert chess players can fall back to talking about chess
  - Find a sparring partner with whom you communicate in your target language
  - Find a coach using your target language
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# HOW?

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## Key pillars of language learning combined with chess

- **Talking:** Sparring partner, coach, chess events, online events
  - **Listening:** Chess podcasts, streams, chess content on Social Media, TV shows and films
  - **Reading:** Chess books and articles, Social Media, online courses
  - **Writing:** blog posts, Social Media, chatting with chess friends
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# TALKING

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- Sparring partner, coach, chess tournaments, online events, interviewing players

Omg, the introvert Northern German chess player talks o.o

Wait, talking in chess?

**Bonus for introverts:**  
When playing chess, you don't always need to speak. You can just sit there and play. No need to talk all day in your target language.

# SCHACHEVENTS ZUM ÜBEN

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Englisch:

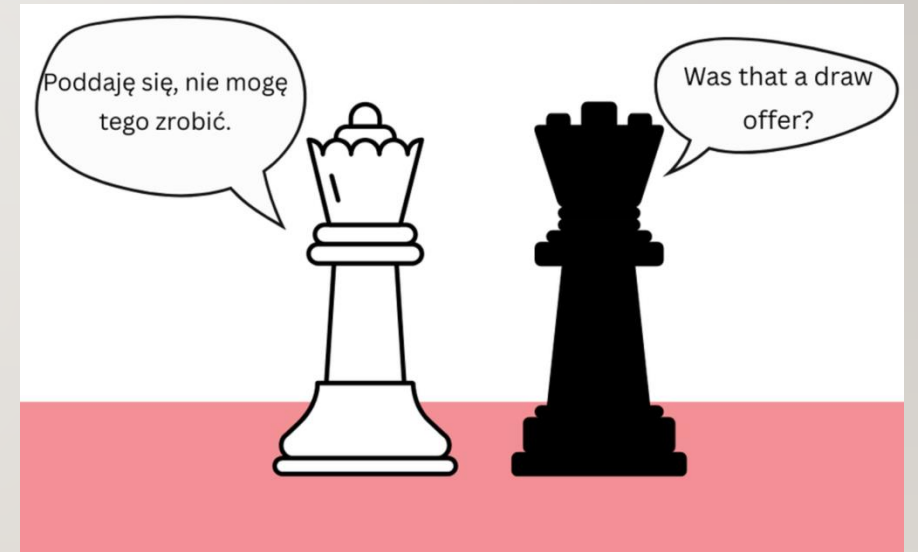
- International überall, z.B. Turnier in Pardubice (Tschechien)

Deutsch:

- z.B. Grenke Open (Karlsruhe)

Spanisch:

- z.B. Turniere in Linares (Geschichte: ehemaliges Wimbledon des Schachs)



# TALKING: LEVEL UP!

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## **Work with your language(s) in chess!**

- Get a coaching or arbiter licence in your target language
  - Licensed International Arbiters need to have working knowledge of several languages
- Volunteer roles
  - At a chess club/event in a region where your target language is used
  - Supporting speakers of your target language in your region

# LISTENING – HÖREN - ESCUCHAR

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- podcasts
  - streams
  - Social Media,
  - TV shows: The Queen's Gambit
  - films
- Content creator on Youtube:
  - WFM AnnaCramling:  
<https://www.youtube.com/@AnnaCramling>.
  - IM Levy Rozman aka. GothamChess:  
<https://www.youtube.com/@GothamChess>.
  - WGM Josefine Safarli:  
<https://www.youtube.com/@josefineschach>.
  - GM Rasmus Svane:  
<https://www.youtube.com/@GMRasmusSvane42>

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# READING – LESEN - LEER

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- Chess books,
- chess articles,
- Social Media,
- online courses

# WRITING – SCHREIBEN - ESCRIBIR

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- Messaging with friends about chess
- Lernzettel in der Lernsprache

## **Level up! Digging deeper into chess writing:**

- Content creation: blog posts, articles, Social Media posts
- Content translation

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TO PUT IT INTO A  
NUTSHELL

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IF CHESS IS  
YOUR  
HOBBY...

... there are definitely ways for you to  
combine it with your language learning.

Moreover...

WHATEVER  
YOUR HOBBY  
IS...

... there are always ways to combine  
them with language learning.

# SPRACHRÄTSEL IM SCHACH?!

- Im Turnierschach schreiben die Spieler\*innen die Züge beider Seiten auf
- Diese Notation wird verwendet, um Spielverläufe nachspielbar zu machen
- Ein Buchstabe für die Figur (meist Anfangsbuchstabe) und Koordinaten des Zielfelds
- Genutzte Sprache der Notation unabhängig von Spielort wählbar

Eröffnung *Pirc Verteidigung*

|    |             |             |    |  |    |
|----|-------------|-------------|----|--|----|
| 1  | <i>e4</i>   | <i>d6</i>   | 21 |  | 41 |
| 2  | <i>d4</i>   | <i>Sf6</i>  | 22 |  | 42 |
| 3  | <i>Sc3</i>  | <i>g6</i>   | 23 |  | 43 |
| 4  | <i>Lc4</i>  | <i>Lg7</i>  | 24 |  | 44 |
| 5  | <i>Sf3</i>  | <i>O-O</i>  | 25 |  | 45 |
| 6  | <i>O-O</i>  | <i>Sxe4</i> | 26 |  | 46 |
| 7  | <i>Sxe4</i> | <i>d5</i>   | 27 |  | 47 |
| 8  | <i>Ld3</i>  | <i>dx4</i>  | 28 |  | 48 |
| 9  | <i>Lxe4</i> | <i>...</i>  | 29 |  | 49 |
| 10 |             |             | 30 |  | 50 |

**Aktivität:** Ihr bekommt die Notation von einem Spiel und müsst herausfinden, welche Sprache verwendet wird. [Link zum Artikel mit Rätseln zur Notation in verschiedenen Sprachen.](#)

# BOOKS – BÜCHER - LIBROS

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- Carlstedt, Jonathan (2023): „Die kleine Schachschule: Regeln, Strategien und Spielzüge verständlich erklärt“, 3. Auflage, humboldt: Hannover.
- De la Villa, Jesus (2023): *100 endgames you must know*, Englische Version, 6. verbesserte Ausgabe, Alkmaar: New in Chess.
- De la Villa García, Jesús (2018): *Los 100 finales que hay que saber*, Spanische Version, 3. überarbeitete Ausgabe, Santa Eulalia de Morcín: Editorial Chessy.
- Bücher zur  
Stappenmethode: <https://www.stappenmethode.de/schuelerhefte/?p=1>

# LINKS (II)

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Chess content on Youtube:

- WFM AnnaCramling: <https://www.youtube.com/@AnnaCramling>.
- IM Levy Rozman aka. GothamChess: <https://www.youtube.com/@GothamChess>.
- WGM Josefine Safarli: <https://www.youtube.com/@josefineschach>.
- GM Rasmus Svane: <https://www.youtube.com/@GMRasmusSvane42>.

# LINKS (III)

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- <https://lichess.org/@/MartinaGe/blog/chess-notation-puzzle-algebraic-notation-in-several-languages/2uLIZvvG>
- <https://martina-gerdts.de/schach/lernmaterial-schach/>
- <https://martina-gerdts.de/bilingual-endgames-material/>