

Daniel S. Todd has been President of Assembly 8 of the Society of American Magicians, and Ring 1 of the International Brotherhood of Magicians. He has performed hundreds of magic shows for dozens of charities since the early 1970's.

Dan received his M.A. in Computer Resource and Information Management from Webster University in 1997, B.A.C.S. from Missouri Baptist University in 1996, A.S.E.E. from Missouri Technical College in 1992.

Dan has an Electronics Engineer, IT Consultant, IT Director, and Programmer. He is retired, but still works part-time as a chess instructor for the Chess club and Scholastic Center of St. Louis Missouri, since 2017. He teaches chess and performs magic at many Childrens Hospitals.

He taught chess in about a dozen private and public schools in st. Louis City and county. He utilize demo boards, magic, other games supporting chess, relay race to set up a chess set, and he created poems and songs about chess.

Enjoy these and use them to spice it up.

Chess Poems and Songs

by
Daniel Stuart Todd

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Checkmate

Daniel Stuart Todd - 4/20/2024

Sing to "You are my Sunshine"

[Verse 1]

*You said you'd play chess, you always play chess
We dreamt of winning all our games
But when we lose one, yes, we will lose some
We just set up and play again*

[Chorus]

*You play for checkmate, yes, for checkmate
It makes us happy each time we win
You know your openings, you see chess patterns
We love to say it's checkmate, I win*

[Verse 2]

*You always loved chess, it made you happy
Promise you will stay and play
Please don't leave me to play another
Just stay and play all day*

[Chorus]

[Verse 3]

*You told me once though, you really loved it
But that no one else, could be so fun
If you ever leave me to play another
You would shatter all of my dreams*

[Chorus]

A Touch is a Move

Daniel S. Todd - 3/23/2024

Sang to “Three Blind Mice”
(A song for fun and learning)

*A touch is a move. A touch is a take.
So, sit on your hands and avoid that mistake.
You touched a piece so you must move now.
You can't change your mind and undo it somehow.
Unless you could ask your opponent and they allow,
because a touch is a move.*

I'm About to Check Your King

Daniel S. Todd - 3/23/2024

Sang to “Mary Had a Little Lamb”

*I'm about to check your King,
check your King, check your King.
I'm about to check your King,
There's not much you can do.*

*The only move that you can make,
you can make, you can make.
The only move that you can make,
Is castle on Queen-side.*

*My Knight will fork you anyway, anyway, anyway.
My Knight will fork you anyway,
Square a8 is your escape.*

*My Queen and Rook are a battery, battery, battery.
My Queen and Rook are a battery,
I moved a7, checkmate!*

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Who am I?

Daniel Stuart Todd – 9/4/2017

We line up here, side by side,
out in front, nowhere to hide,
forward march, with no retreat,
but I can bring a lot of heat!

Who am I?

A Pawn

I start in a corner where I belong,
It is rank or file I move along,
I work alone or as a pair,
when I am free, you should beware!

Who am I?

A Rook.

It's close to nobility is where I begin,
it's through the cracks I angle in,
upon my color I should be,
for I only move diagonally!

Who am I?

A Bishop.

Pawn-Rook-Knight

Daniel S. Todd - 3/23/2024

Sang to "Do-Re-Mi" from the movie Sound of Music
(A song for fun and learning)

Pawns, are pieces, that start out front.

Rooks, they move rank and file.

Knights are cool, because they can jump.

Bishops, can angle across the board.

Queens, they move like rays of sun.

Kings, can only move one square.

These, are pieces used in CHESS!

And that brings us back to

Pawns, Pawns, Pawns, Pawns...

(Repeat as many times as you like)

Passed Pawn

Daniel S. Todd - 3/23/2024

Sang to "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star"

Passed pawn passed pawn, all alone

On g6 and far from home

If I'm captured or I'm blocked,

All my progress, it would stop.

If I advance and I promote,

A Queen I'll become and then there's hope!

Slowest Chess Player Ever

Daniel Stuart Todd - 7/22/2023

Sang to "Daisy Daisy"

*Laaazy, laaazy it's your turn to move,
I'm half crazy, what are you trying to prove?
The chess pieces are still setup,
and time it will not let up.
So, get it in gear, oh please my dear,
For the flag is about to drop!*

*Waiting, I'm waiting, and my beard is growing long,
hashtag waiting, people will text that you've gone.
If you are still yet thinking,
like a ship you're slowly sinking.
Get on the deck and save the wreck.
Your time is about to stop!*

*Wasted, wasted, you know how your time was spent,
Considering, candidate moves, that is how it went.
Your rating will be lower, a snail could not move slower.
The flag will drop, with a great big plop,
You've lost, on time, again!
Plop!*

Stabled between the bishop and rook,
my steed, he moves by the book,
I jump with ease above the rest,
and to fork two others, I do that best.
Who am I?
A Knight.

My partner and I, we rule the roost,
but I'm the one with the power boost,
I can move from here to there,
I can move most anywhere.
Who am I?
The Queen.

My bride begins right by my side,
it's good to be me, but I tend to hide,
my enemies cannot capture me,
but surrounded and attacked, will Checkmate me!
Who am I?
The King.

First We Shake Hands

Daniel Stuart Todd – 9/6/2017

I shake his hand and say good luck,
but I don't really want him to win,
my opponent will be, exactly like me,
he smiles, but I see the grin,
The opening move it starts off the clock,
and into the arena we go,
with no time to waste, I get into the pace,
with zeal my pieces they flow,
The middle game on, still using my pawns,
a maze they create you see,
a few pieces gone, no one has a yawn,
I captured a rook with glee,
It's my queen he was after,
but that didn't matter, the game is about the king,
with all the commotion, to me in slow motion,
checkmate, that was the thing,
Shock, awe, and silence,
my pieces they had moved in alliance,
it's all over now, we stand, and I bow, good game,
yes it was, we agreed.

Move Your Pawn

Daniel S. Todd - 10/8/2018

Sang to: "Row Row Row Your Boat"

*Move, move, move, your Pawn, move your Pawn, I say,
Let's have fun and play the game, I can't wait all day.
Move, move, move, your Rook, move your Rook, I say,
Let's have fun and play the game, I can't wait all day.
Move, move, move, your Knight, move your Knight, I say,
Let's have fun and play the game, I can't wait all day.
Move, move, move, your Queen, move your Queen, I say,
Let's have fun and play the game, I can't wait all day.
Move, move, move, your King, move your King, I say,
Let's have fun and play the game, I can't wait all day.*

Let's play Chess Now

Daniel S. Todd - 10/8/2018

Sang to: Frère Jacques "Are You Sleeping"

*Let's play chess now, Let's play chess now,
Set the board, set the board,
Queens start on their color, facing one another,
Pawns out front, pawns out front.*

On The First Day Of Chess Class

Daniel S. Todd - 3/27/2018

(A song for fun and learning)

*"On the (1st) day of chess class,
the instructor said to me:"*

(Repeat changing line number and repeating lines in assenting order)

1st *"Above all else you must protect your King!"*

2nd *"Rooks move rank and file."*

3rd *"Only Knights can jump."*

4th *"Shake hands first."*

5th *"THINK, BEFORE YOU MOVE!"*

6th *"A touch is a take."*

7th *"A touch is a move."*

8th *"Queen starts on her color."*

9th *"Watch out for forking."*

10th *"Bishops stay on color."*

11th *"En passant." (Pronounced: On-Pawsont)*

12th *"Don't get pinned."*

Strict Are the Rules

Daniel Stuart Todd - 9/6/2017

So strict whose are rules of tournament chess,
they can bring tears even from the best,
Always make a choice within your head,
once you touch it, you've made your bed,
perfect describes neither I or nor you,
there is no "Oops, may I undo?",
and in this game, should never be heard,
please pardon my French, "*Merde!*"

The Thrill of the Game

Daniel Stuart Todd – 8/26/2020

When our turn is to open, twenty moves we could make.

The principles taught; guide the path we should take.

When seeing a threat, we should keep it at bay,

But there could be an opportunity, it depends on the play.

If a path to glory, is not available just yet,

Stick to development, best to avoid, then to regret.

When castling is complete, for the safety of our king,

We move to the middle game. Which skills, do we bring?

The tactics we choose, the positions we take,

all that depends, on moves that they make.

There are times to be cautious and times to advance.

One must be clever when one takes a chance.

The GMs Had Left a Chocolate Chess Set Out

Daniel Stuart Todd - 7/7/2023

GMs had left a chocolate chess set out,
it certainly looked delicious,
I ate all 16 pawns without not a single shout,
perhaps no GM was suspicious!

GMs had left a chocolate chess set out,
only the pieces on the back rank were left.
I swallowed four rooks and looked about,
to see if the GM had noticed the theft.

GMs had left a chocolate chess set out,
one dozen left, I did the count,
The knights they jumped all about,
As I ate both horsey and its mount.

GMs had left a chocolate chess set out,
the count was now down to eight.
The bishops they threw around their clout,
but I gave a prayer before I ate.

Now dining with royalty is never a bore,
I enjoyed the sweets that the GMs tout.
The kings and queens they were no more,
GMs had left a chocolate chess set out.

Twass the Night before Sinquefield Cup

Daniel S. Todd - 12/15/2022

'Twass the night before Sinquefield Cup, in honor of Rex.
The grand masters all prepped, so they'd do their best;
The chess pieces setup on the tables with care,
Chess clocks with new batteries and two queens for spare;

The players where are sleeping all snug in their beds;
While visions of top rankings danced in their heads;
The tournament director had planned for mishaps.
We settled our brains for a per-tournament nap,

When on social media there arose such a chatter,
He opened his laptop to see what's the matter.
Logged into Windows, his browsers new tab,
Hoping no evildoer had text something bad.

The resolution on the screen was quite high, don't you know,
Gave off a great luster and made all objects aglow,
When what to his wondering eyes did appear,
But a tweet from a man quite full of his beer,

It states that St. Louis is the place we should be,
For watching the masters of chess with such glee.
If 40 move in 90min is the name of your game,
Then here is your chance put forth you name:

"Now, Magnus! Now Ding! Now, Maxime and Alireza!
On, Levon! On, Fabiano! On, Wesley So!
To the top of the ratings! To the top of the list!
Now attack away! attack away! attack away all!"

While we dance on the board, certain positions are desired.

The best ones, however, are often inspired.

While adrenaline flows, we might feel rushed,
But the background has faded, and all sounds are hushed.

One move forced another, no choice to be made,
It is as if they are poked, by a very sharp blade.

Especially in the end game, the move sequence matters,
You have captured their pieces, it left them in tatters,
If their king is surrounded, no moves, no escaping,
He had better be in check, or we're just stalemating.
So, keep up the tempo, time pressure, make haste,
Should they run out of time, it is victory we taste.

Opening Principles of Chess

Daniel Stuart Todd - 3/4/2021

When you start the game take control of the center,
so those that follow will know as they enter,
that you've staked your claim and this is your space,
you are prepared and that you'll set the pace.

To develop minor pieces is second on the list,
just don't block a Bishop or he might show you his fist.
Start with the Knights then the Bishops can follow,
your setting it up so your threat won't be hollow.

Avoid pushing Pawns more than once at the start,
let your opponent make a blunder and play to that part.
Your good Pawn structure could help in the end,
so avoiding reactions you have principles to attend.

Once the Queen has moved out and no more pieces in the way,
lean back, take it in and observe where every piece lay.
Now you can castle to either side of the board,
if not, that mistake is one that you can't afford.

Castling King-side means the King moves two squares to the right,
then the Rook to his left side, prepared for a fight.
If castling Queen-side is the way you are intending,
then when it's all over a Pawn needs defending.

With all of this done at the opening of the game,
keep tabs whether your opponent has also done the same.
Now you you have completed setting the stage,
rest assured that your pieces are ready to engage.

Ah The King

Daniel Stuart Todd – 9/6/2017

Ah, the king, I knew him well,
but how I lost him, I dare not tell,
I thought this day I'd do just fine,
for all my stars were in align,
I'll start anew and battle onward,
I dare not retreat or be called a coward,
I know not what my fate awaits,
I'm just not yet ready for the pearly gates,

My pawns I see are all in a row,
On my rank 2 and ready to go,
Charging and challenging whomever they meet,
Or if I choose, they might just greet,
I'll select the piece and choose him wisely,
By planning and knowing precisely,
Being guarded throughout, I'll Castle my King,
Aware of the commitment, that this action will bring,

With each piece captured when I advance,
I get the feeling, that I still have a chance,
On rare occasions left unprotected,
A pawn of mine might feel a bit neglected,
But in his gallant sacrifice,
The enemy captured was worth the price,
A gallant game is what we choose,

How bitter the defeat each time we lose,
And if a game should go that way,
We live to play another day!