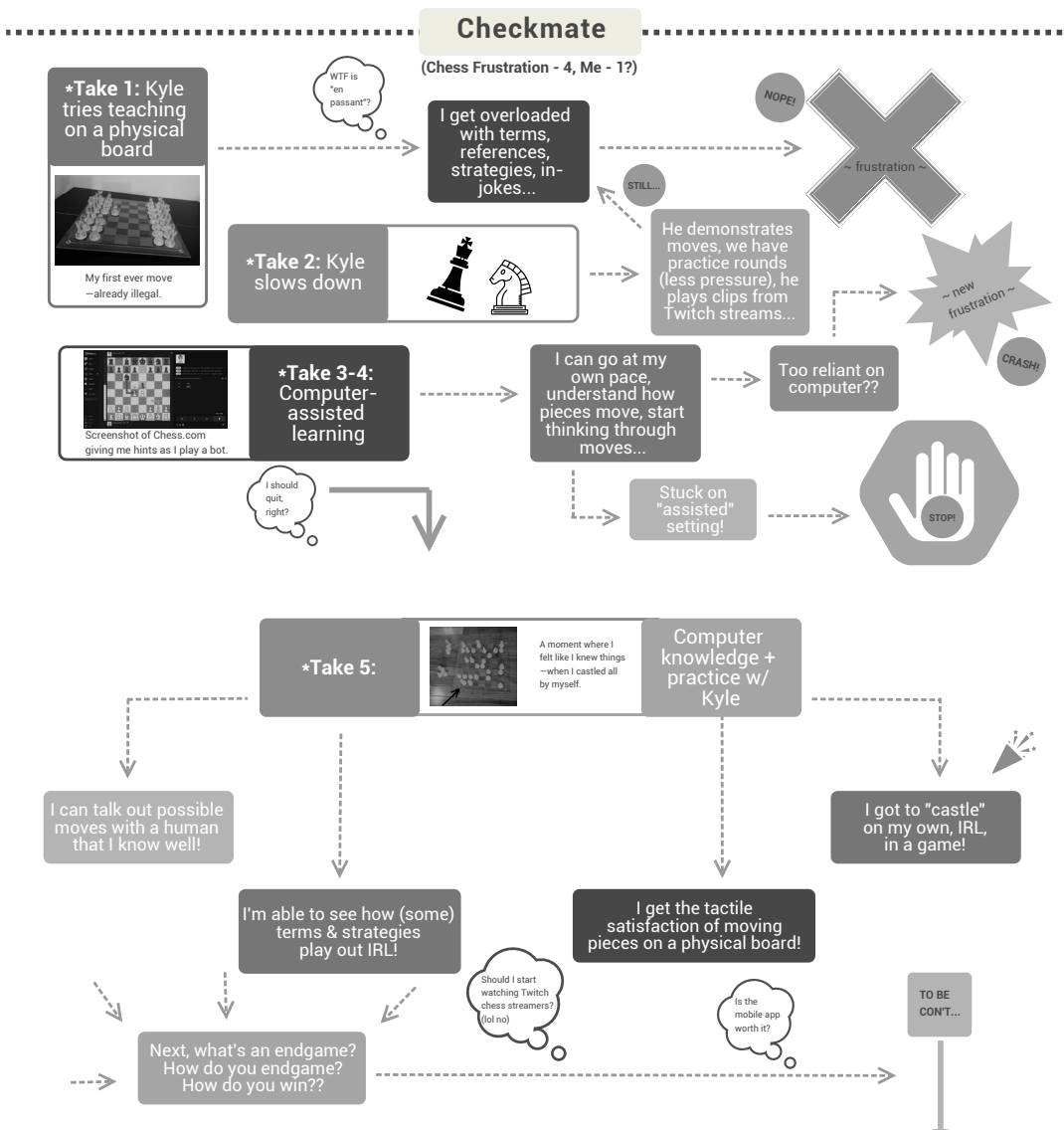


Checkmate: A Visual Companion to “I Should Quit, Right?”

Charley Koenig

In this infographic, I wanted to visually map out the various paths I took in my attempts at learning to play chess. Learning a new literate activity, or perhaps learning anything new in general, is almost always messier and more complicated than we initially think it's going to be. Those paths often got dicey for me—even discouraging at times. Starting with learning from my partner, Kyle, Take 1 was a combination of intense information overload plus intense frustration. Take 2 started a little better as we slowed down significantly, but it eventually followed the same trajectory as Take 1. For Takes 3 and 4, I tried playing on my laptop so I could look things up at my own pace. Although the computer helped organize the information I needed to learn, I could only get so far playing bots in assisted mode, so crashes and roadblocks were inevitable. But as I continued to come back to the task in different ways with various tools or supplemental resources, I slowly started to build my knowledge, comfort level, and skill in chess. Finally, during Take 5, the real possibilities of the game began to open for me. By combining the digital tools available via my computer with the physical board in front of me, along with a human I knew as my opponent, I was finally able to feel comfortable trying my strength. Unfortunately, I didn't get so far as winning

a game. However, there were a lot of little accomplishments that added to my confidence and my willingness to keep moving forward (I mean, sure, I understand a lot more chess terms now, but did you see me castle all by myself?). So, though it's an ongoing effort for me, I now know (some of) how to play chess. I'm also more aware of my natural uptake, and I'm conscious of learning strategies that might work well for me in future new learning (or writing) situations.



Charley Koenig is an English studies PhD student studying creative writing at Illinois State University. When she is not rewatching *Parks & Rec*, she is probably rewatching *Schitt's Creek* or listening to the *Harry Potter* audiobooks while trying to write, teach, student, parent, and crochet with her partner, daughter, and dogs in Bloomington, Illinois.

