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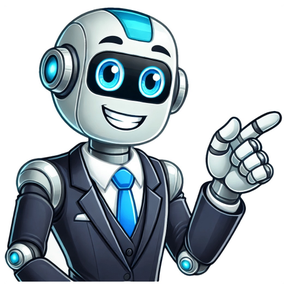

Before diving into the specific steps for achieving the IM title, it’s important to understand the role of FIDE (Fédération Internationale des Échecs), the world’s governing body for chess. FIDE is responsible for setting the standards, rules, and regulations for chess worldwide, including the granting of titles such as Grandmaster (GM), International Master (IM), and Candidate Master (CM). These chess ranking titles are based on a player’s rating and performance in official tournaments.FIDE recognizes a variety of titles, each representing a different level of achievement in chess: Grandmaster (GM): The highest and most prestigious title in chess, requiring a minimum FIDE rating of 2500 and three GM norms.International Master (IM): One level below GM, the IM title requires a FIDE rating of 2400 and three IM norms (more on norms later).FIDE Master (FM): Awarded to players with a FIDE rating of 2300 or higher.Candidate Master (CM): Granted to players with a FIDE rating of 2200 or higher.These titles are awarded for life and signify a player’s high level of competence in chess.FIDE also offers gender-specific titles such as Woman Grandmaster (WGM) and Woman International Master (WIM). These titles have slightly lower rating requirements compared to their general counterparts but are equally prestigious within the female chess community. What is The Minimum FIDE Rating Requirement for becoming IM?The first requirement for becoming an IM is reaching a FIDE rating of 2400. This rating is calculated based on your performance in official FIDE-rated tournaments. Unlike other milestones, you only need to achieve this rating at any point in your chess career; it doesn’t need to be maintained indefinitely.Norms are a crucial aspect of earning chess titles. To become an IM, you need to achieve three IM norms in FIDE-sanctioned tournaments. Each norm demonstrates that you’ve performed at an IM level in competitive games against strong opponents. What are The Tournament and Game Requirements for Becoming IM?In addition to reaching the 2400 rating, your IM norms must be achieved across at least 27 games. This ensures that a player’s IM-level performance is consistent, not just a result of a few lucky games.Getting an International Master (IM) norm is a significant step in a chess player’s journey. To achieve a norm, you’ll need to perform at an elite level across multiple games within a tournament, often against opponents from different federations. What Constitutes an IM Norm? How To Get IM Norm in Chess?An IM norm is a performance standard indicating that you’ve played at an International Master level in a given tournament. To earn a norm, you must perform exceptionally well against opponents who are already titled or have high FIDE ratings.Typically, you’ll need to achieve a performance rating of 2450 or higher in a tournament to qualify for an IM norm. The specifics can vary based on the strength of your opponents and the structure of the tournament, but the idea is to show that you consistently perform at a high level.IM norms can only be earned in FIDE-rated tournaments that meet certain conditions. These events must include opponents from different federations (countries) and have at least three titled players (IMs, GMs, etc.). The stronger your opponents, the better your chances of earning a norm. Role of International CompetitionsInternational tournaments play a crucial role in earning norms because they expose players to stronger, diverse competition. Competing in international open tournaments or round-robin events often increases your chances of achieving an IM norm, as the strength and variety of opponents tend to be higher. Developing a Consistent Training RegimenReaching the IM title requires not only dedication but also a strategic and focused training plan. Developing a consistent training routine that includes studying key openings, improving middlegame tactics, and mastering endgame strategies is critical for success. For many aspiring players, working with an experienced chess coach can provide invaluable guidance in targeted areas and help you maintain the discipline needed to achieve this level of play. Importance of Playing Against Titled PlayersThe more experience you have playing against strong, titled players, the better your chances of improving. Seek out FIDE-rated tournaments with higher-ranked players and practice consistently on online platforms that offer rated games. This experience helps you understand how to handle pressure and navigate complex positions against stronger opponents. Utilizing Chess Software and DatabasesModern platforms like CircleChess and Chess.com are invaluable for analyzing your games and improving your skills. Use these tools to: Review your tournament games.Learn from your mistakes.Study your opponents’ games.Prepare for upcoming tournaments by reviewing potential opponents’ playing styles. Overcoming Rating PlateausIt’s common for players to hit rating plateaus, where progress seems slow or nonexistent. To overcome this, you need to analyze your games thoroughly and understand where your weaknesses lie. Consider focusing on specific areas, such as improving opening theory or sharpening your calculation skills, to break through these plateaus. Handling Tournament Pressure for NormsThe pressure to earn a norm in tournaments can sometimes affect a player’s performance. Learning how to manage stress and focus on each game individually, rather than obsessing over earning a norm can improve your chances of success. Balancing Multiple ResponsibilitiesFor many aspiring chess players, balancing life outside of chess (like school, work, or family) with the pursuit of an IM title can be challenging. Creating a structured schedule that prioritizes both chess and personal responsibilities will help you maintain momentum without burning out. Compiling and Submitting Tournament RecordsOnce you’ve achieved your norms and reached the 2400 rating, the next step is compiling your tournament records to submit to FIDE. Your tournament organizer or national chess federation will often handle the paperwork, but it’s crucial to ensure that all necessary documentation is in order. Meeting Norm and Rating CriteriaBefore submitting your application, double-check that you’ve met the following requirements: A FIDE rating of at least 2400.Three valid IM norms.At least 27 games across tournaments. Role of National Chess FederationsYour national chess federation plays a key role in submitting your application to FIDE. They verify your tournament results, submit the necessary paperwork, and pay the processing fee on your behalf.Achieving the International Master (IM) title is a significant milestone in a chess player’s career, marking the transition from advanced to elite play. The process of meeting the 2400 rating requirement and earning three norms is no small feat – it takes hard work, discipline, and a strategic approach to both training and competition.For aspiring IMs, the key is to stay motivated, play consistently in strong tournaments, and maintain a growth mindset. With the right preparation and determination, you can achieve this prestigious title.At Caissa School of Chess, you can train under the guidance of experienced tutors who have successfully navigated these levels themselves. Whether you’re aiming for your first title or pushing towards becoming an International Master or Grandmaster, expert coaches provide tailored guidance and help you prepare for the norms and ratings needed to achieve your goals. Title for chess players awarded by FIDE Magnus Carlsen is a Grandmaster.FIDE titles are awarded by the international chess governing body FIDE (Fédération Internationale des Échecs) for outstanding performance. The highest such title is Grandmaster (GM). Titles generally require a combination of Elo rating and norms (performance benchmarks in competitions including other titled players). Once awarded, titles are held for life except in cases of fraud or cheating. Open titles may be earned by all players, while women's titles are restricted to female players. Many strong female players hold both open and women's titles. FIDE also awards titles for arbiters, organizers and trainers. Titles for correspondence chess, chess problem composition and chess problem solving are no longer administered by FIDE. A chess title, usually in an abbreviated form, may be used as an honorific. For example, Magnus Carlsen may be styled as "GM Magnus Carlsen". The term "master" for a strong chess player was initially used informally. From the late 19th century and onwards, various national chess federations began to draw up formal requirements for the use of such a title. The term "Grandmaster", in the form of the German loan word Großmeister, was a formal title in the Soviet Union, and had also been in informal use for the world's elite players for several decades before its institution by FIDE in 1950.[1] FIDE's first titles were awarded in 1950 and consisted of 27 Grandmasters, 94 International Masters, and 17 Woman International Masters, known at the time simply as Woman Masters.[2] FIDE's first grandmasters were: Ossip Bernstein (France) Isaac Boleslavsky (USSR) Igor Bondarevsky (USSR) Mikhail Botvinnik (USSR) David Bronstein (USSR) Oldřich Duras (Czechoslovakia) Max Euwe (Netherlands) Reuben Fine (USA) Salo Flohr (USSR) Ernst Grünfeld (Austria) Paul Keres (USSR) Boris Kostić (Yugoslavia) Alexander Kotov (USSR) Grigory Levenfish (USSR) Andor Lilienthal (USSR) Géza Maróczy (Hungary) Jacques Mieses (England) Miguel Najdorf (Argentina) Viacheslav Ragozin (USSR) Samuel Reshevsky (USA) Akiba Rubinstein (Poland) Friedrich Sämisch (West Germany) Vasily Smyslov (USSR) Gideon Ståhlberg (Sweden) László Szabó (Hungary) Savielly Tartakower (France) Milan Vidmar (Yugoslavia) The titles were awarded by a vote of the FIDE Congress before the requirements became more formalized. In 1957, FIDE introduced norms (qualifying standards) for FIDE titles.[3] FIDE introduced a higher women only title, that of Woman Grandmaster (WGM) in 1976. In 1978 the subordinate titles of FIDE Master (FM) and Woman FIDE master (WFM) were introduced, followed in 2002 by the titles of Candidate Master (CM) and Woman Candidate Master (WCM). Similar titles are awarded by the International Correspondence Chess Federation, and by the World Federation for Chess Composition for both composing and solving chess problems.[4] These bodies work in cooperation with FIDE but are now independent of it. Open titles, October 2023[5] Title Men Women Total Grandmaster (GM) 1,772 41 1,813 International Master (IM) 3,893 134 4,027 FIDE Master (FM) 8,775 54 8,829 FIDE Candidate Master (CM) 2,356 22 2,378 Total 16,796 251 17,047 The titles of Grandmaster, International Master, FIDE Master and Candidate Master are available to all over-the-board chess players. The requirements for each title have varied over time, but generally require having demonstrated a prescribed level of achievement in tournaments at classical time controls under FIDE-approved conditions. Main article: Grandmaster (chess) The title Grandmaster is awarded to outstanding chess players by FIDE. Apart from World Champion, Grandmaster is the highest title a chess player can attain. In chess literature it is usually abbreviated to GM. The abbreviation IGM for "International Grandmaster" is occasionally seen, usually in older literature. The usual way to obtain the title is to achieve three Grandmaster-level performances (called norms), along with a FIDE rating of 2500 or more. The precise definition of a GM norm is complex and has frequently been amended, but in general a grandmaster norm is defined as a performance rating of at least 2600 over 9 or more rounds. In addition, the field must have an average rating of at least 2380, must include at least three grandmasters, and must include players from a mix of national federations.[6] The title may also be awarded directly without going through the usual norm requirements in a few high-level tournaments, provided the player has a FIDE rating of over 2300. These include: Reaching the final 16 in the FIDE World Cup Winning the Women's Chess World Cup Winning the Women's World Championship Winning the World Junior Championship (U20) Winning the World Senior Championship, both in the 50+ and 65+ divisions Winning a Continental (e.g. Pan American, European, Asian or African) championship[7] Beginning with Nona Gaprindashvili in 1978, a number of women have earned the GM title. Since about 2000, most of the top 10 women have held the GM title. This should not be confused with the Woman Grandmaster (WGM) title. At 12 years, 4 months and 25 days, Abhimanyu Mishra became the youngest person ever to qualify for the Grandmaster title in July 2021. The record was previously held by Sergey Karjakin at 12 years, 7 months for 19 years, Judit Polgár at 15 years and 4 months, and Bobby Fischer at 15 years, 6 months and 1 day for 33 years.[8] "International Master" redirects here. For the snooker tournament formerly known under this name, see British Open (snooker). The title International Master is awarded to strong chess players who are below the level of grandmaster. Instituted along with the Grandmaster title in 1950, it is usually abbreviated as IM in chess literature. Like the grandmaster title, the usual way to obtain the title is to achieve three required title norms over 27 or more games and a FIDE rating of 2400 or more. In general, an IM norm is defined as a performance rating of at least 2450 over 9 or more games. In addition, the field must have an average rating of at least 2230, must include at least three International Masters or Grandmasters, and must include players from a mix of national federations.[6] There are also several ways the IM title can be awarded directly without going through the usual norm process, provided the player has a rating of at least 2200. From July 2017, these are as follows: Qualifying for the FIDE World Cup Finishing second in the Women's World Championship Finishing second or third in the World Junior Championship (U20) Finishing second or third in the World Senior Championship, in both the over 50 and over 65 divisions Winning (outright or shared) the World Youth Championship (U18) Winning the World Youth Championship (U16) outright Finishing second or third in a Continental championship Winning (outright or shared) a Continental over 50 championship, over 65 championship, or under 20 championship Winning a Continental under 18 championship outright Winning a sub-Continental championship Winning a Commonwealth, Francophone or Ibero-American championship Winning a World Championship for People with Disabilities[7] After becoming an IM, most professional players set their next goal to becoming a Grandmaster. It is also possible to become a Grandmaster without ever having been an International Master. Larry Christiansen of the United States (1977), Wang Hao of China, Anish Giri of the Netherlands, Olga Girya of Russia (2021) and former world champions Mikhail Tal of the Soviet Union and Vladimir Kramnik of Russia all became Grandmasters without ever having been IMs. Bobby Fischer of the United States attained both titles solely by virtue of qualifying for the 1958 Interzonal (IM title) and 1959 Candidates Tournament (GM title), only incidentally becoming IM before GM. The more usual path is first to become an IM, then move on to the GM level. At 10 years, 8 months, and 16 days, Faustino Oro of Argentina became the youngest-ever person to qualify for the IM title in 2024.[9] Introduced in 1978 along with WFM,[10] FM ranks below the title of International Master but ahead of Candidate Master. Unlike the Grandmaster and International Master titles, there is no requirement for a player to achieve norms. The usual way for a player to qualify for the FIDE Master title is by achieving an Elo rating of 2300 or more.[6] There are also many ways the title can be gained by players with a rating of at least 2100 but less than 2300; they include: Winning the World Youth Championship (U14 and U12) Finishing second or third in the World Youth Championship (U18 and U16) Finishing second or third in a Continental over 50, over 65, under 20, or under 18 championship Scoring 65% or more over at least 9 games at an olympiad Winning a Continental under 12, under 14, or under 16 championship Finishing second or third in a Commonwealth, Francophone, or Ibero-American championship The youngest player to be awarded the FM title is Alekhine Nouri from Philippines who was awarded the title after winning the 14th ASEAN Age Group Chess Championships 2013 in Thailand at age seven.[11] The youngest player to gain the FM title by achieving an Elo rating of 2300 is Faustino Oro from Argentina who, when he was nine, hit 2314 Elo rating after participating in the ITT Ajedrez Martelli Jovenes Talentos 2023.[12] Introduced in 2002 along with WCM,[13] the usual way for a player to qualify for the Candidate Master title is by achieving an Elo rating of 2200 or more. For players rated over 2000 but under 2200, there are many other ways to gain the title; they include: Finishing first, second, or third in the World Youth Championship (U8 and U10) Finishing second or third in a Continental under 12, under 14, or under 16 championship Finishing second or third in the World Youth Championship (U14 and U12) Scoring 50% or more over at least 7 games at an olympiad or other special events In case a player achieves the CM title through the Olympiad performance, the minimum required rating of 2000 does not apply, after the title regulations update effective from January 1st, 2024.[14] Prior to 2018, there was no minimum rating requirement, and coming in the top three of an U8 continental tournament was acceptable. As a result, there are a number of CMs with far lower ratings than 2000.[15] Women's titles, October 2023[16][better source needed] Title Total Woman Grandmaster (WGM) 326 Woman International Master (WIM) 856 Woman FIDE Master (WFM) 1,892 Woman Candidate Master (WCM) 884 Total 3,958 Though the open FIDE titles are not gender-segregated, the following four titles given by FIDE are exclusive to women and may be held simultaneously with an open title. The requirements for these titles are about 200 Elo rating points lower than the requirements for the similarly named open titles. These titles are sometimes criticized by both male and female players, and some female players elect not to take them. For example, Grandmaster Judit Polgár, in keeping with her policy of playing only open competitions, never took a women's title.[17] FIDE strips trans men of any women's titles they might have earned while competing as a woman.[18][19][20] Woman Grandmaster is the highest-ranking chess title restricted to women. FIDE introduced the WGM title in 1976, joining the previously introduced lower-ranking title, Woman International Master.[21] The usual way to obtain the WGM title is similar to the open titles, where a FIDE rating of 2300 and three norms of 2400 performance rating is required against opponents who are higher rated than 2130 on average.[22] The winner of the World Girls Junior Championship and some other tournaments like Women's Continental Championship is automatically awarded the WGM title. From 2017, the direct titles are only awarded as long as she can reach the minimum FIDE rating of 2100. The current regulations can be found in the FIDE handbook.[6] Woman International Master is next to the highest-ranking title given by FIDE exclusively to women. FIDE first awarded the WIM title (formerly called International Woman Master, or IWM) in 1950.[23] The usual way to obtain the WIM title is similar to the open titles, where a FIDE rating of 2200 and three norms of 2250 performance rating is required against opponents who are higher rated than 2030 on average. The runners-up in the World Girls Junior Championship, the U18 and U16 World Youth Champions as well Continental Championship medalists and U18 Continental and Regional Champions of the women's section are directly awarded the title. From 2017, direct titles are only awarded as long as she can cross the minimum rating of 2000. The current regulations can be found in the FIDE handbook.[6] Introduced with FM in 1978,[23] the WFM title may be achieved by gaining a FIDE rating of 2100 or more. The U14 and U12 World Youth Champions as well as U16 and U18 medalists of the women's section are directly awarded the title. The U12, U14, U16 Continental and Regional Champions of the women's section are also directly awarded the title. The title can also be acquired by scoring more than 65% points in more than 9 games in the Olympiad. From 2017, direct titles are only awarded as long as a minimum rating of 1900 is achieved.[6] Introduced with CM in 2002,[23] Woman Candidate Master is the lowest-ranking title awarded by FIDE.[22] This title may be achieved by gaining a FIDE rating of 2000 or more. The title can also be acquired by getting a medal in U8, U10, U12, U14, U16 World Youth Championships or Continental and Regional Youth Championships of the women's section as well as by scoring more than 50% points in more than 7 games in the Olympiad. From 2017, direct titles are only awarded as long as a candidate can cross the minimum rating of 1800,[6] however this requirement does not apply for direct WCM titles earned through the Olympiad.[14] Arena titles, September 2024[24] Title Men Women Total Arena Grandmaster (AGM) 416 7 423 Arena International Master (AIM) 1,174 41 1,215 Arena FIDE Master (AFM) 1,663 136 1,799 Arena Candidate Master (ACM) 1,087 126 1,213 Total 4,340 310 4,650 Arena titles can be earned online using FIDE's server, and are intended for players in the lower rating band. Should a player with an arena title gain an over the board FIDE title, this title replaces their arena title.[25] Arena Grandmaster (AGM) is the highest online title. It is achieved by a series of 150 bullet games, 100 blitz games or 50 rapid games with a performance rating of over 2000.[26] Arena International Master (AIM) is achieved by a series of 150 bullet games, 100 blitz games or 50 rapid games with a performance rating of over 1700.[26] Arena FIDE Master (AFM) is achieved by a series of 150 bullet games, 100 blitz games or 50 rapid games with a performance rating of over 1400.[26] Arena Candidate Master (ACM) is achieved by a series of 150 bullet games, 100 blitz games or 50 rapid games with a performance rating of over 1100.[26] Arena titles can be achieved on FIDE Online Arena, the official FIDE online gaming platform. FIDE also awards titles for arbiters, trainers, and organizers. The arbiter titles are International Arbiter (IA) and FIDE Arbiter (FA).[27] The trainer titles (in descending order of expertise) are FIDE Senior Trainer (FST), FIDE Trainer (FT), FIDE Instructor (FI), National Instructor (NI), and Developmental Instructor (DI).[28] The organizer title is FIDE International Organizer (FIO).[29] Chess titles FIDE World Chess Championship List of grandmasters for chess composition Chess problem § Titles ^ Hooper, David; Whyld, Kenneth (1992), The Oxford Companion to Chess (2 ed.), Oxford University Press, p. 156, ISBN 978-0-19-280049-7 ^ Elo, Arpad (1978), The Rating of Chess Players, Past & Present, Arco, pp. 65–66, ISBN 0-668-04721-6 ^ Wall, W. "FIDE History". Archived from the original on 2009-10-28. ^ "Titles - WFCC". Archived from the original on October 8, 2022. Retrieved February 4, 2020. ^ "FIDE Rating list". FIDE. Archived from the original on 2023-10-02. Retrieved 2023-10-02. ^ a b c d e f g "B. Permanent Commissions / 01. 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Regulations for the Titles of Arbiters". FIDE.com. Archived from the original on 27 February 2019. Retrieved 17 August 2019. ^ "07. Regulations for the Titles of Trainers". FIDE.com. Archived from the original on 30 January 2019. Retrieved 17 August 2019. ^ "09. Regulations on Seminars & Title Award for Organizers". FIDE.com. Archived from the original on 26 January 2019. Retrieved 10 December 2021. World Chess Federation FIDE official site FIDE Handbook FIDE Online Arena Retrieved from " Blog / All Articles / Chess IM vs GM International Master vs Grandmaster Explore Amphy Find Online Teachers In chess, the titles International Master (IM), FIDE Master (FM), and Grandmaster (GM) are ranks that signify a player's skill level and achievements. Here's a breakdown of the differences between them: 1. Grandmaster (GM): This is the highest title in chess, awarded by the International Chess Federation (FIDE). To become a Grandmaster, a player must achieve a performance rating of 2600 or higher in a tournament, and they must have achieved this rating in at least three tournaments. In addition, they must have a minimum of 300 Elo rating points, and they must have won or shared first place in a FIDE-rated tournament at least three times in their career. Grandmasters are considered the elite players in the chess world. 2. International Master (IM): This title is the second highest in chess, awarded by FIDE. To become an International Master, a player must achieve a performance rating of 2400 or higher in a tournament, and they must have achieved this rating in at least three tournaments. In addition, they must have a minimum of 2400 Elo rating points, and they must have won or shared first place in a FIDE-rated tournament at least three times in their career. International Masters are considered highly skilled and accomplished players. 3. FIDE Master (FM): This title is the third highest in chess, also awarded by FIDE. To become a FIDE Master, a player must achieve a performance rating of 2200 or higher in a tournament, and they must have achieved this rating in at least three tournaments. In addition, they must have a minimum of 2200 Elo rating points, and they must have won or shared first place in a FIDE-rated tournament at least three times in their career. FIDE Masters are considered to be strong players, but they are not at the same level as Grandmasters or International Masters. In summary, the main differences between these titles are the required performance ratings, Elo rating points, and tournament achievements. Grandmasters are the highest-ranked players, followed by International Masters, and then FIDE Masters. Each title represents a significant level of skill and accomplishment in the world of chess. With so many people new to chess due to the Queen’s Gambit effect, it can be a bit difficult getting straight all the chess terminology. Grandmaster, International Master, tournament norms... What is all of that? In this post, we’re answering all your questions. The Absolute Basics: What’s a Grandmaster? What’s an International Master? Grandmaster is the highest title in the chess world, and achieving it is the most prestigious recognition to a chess player’s strength. Sure, World Champion has a nicer ring to it, but only one person at a time can get it. The Grandmaster title is awarded to anyone who meets the qualification criteria, so there’s no restriction to becoming Grandmaster other than playing strength. International Master is the title immediately below that of Grandmaster. These titles are for life. History of the Grandmaster Title During the 1914 Saint Petersburg super tournament, Russian Tsar Nicholas II declared the five finalists as chess Grandmasters (Emmanuel Lasker, Jose Raul Capablanca, Alexander Alekhine, Siegbert Tarrasch, and Frank Marshall). It was a symbolic event, but the term stayed within the chess community informally to refer to outstanding players, usually after an international tournament victory. In 1950, FIDE – French acronym for World Chess Federation, the international chess governing body – established the modern international title system, and the qualifying criteria for earning them. In ascending order, the system is: FIDE Master (FM), International Master (IM), and Grandmaster (GM), Difference between the Grandmaster Title and International Master Title The difference between both titles lies in the difficulty of meeting their requirements: earning the GM title is far more difficult than the IM title. Thus, there are far more IMs than GMs in the world. Usually, a player earns the International Master when he/she has had a live rating of at least 2400 Elo at any point of their career, and achieves 3 IM norms. Considerably harder is achieving 3 GM norms and a live rating of at least 2500 Elo, the qualifying criteria for the title of Grandmaster. What Are Ratings and Norms? International chess ratings are measured by the Elo system. Created by the Hungarian-American mathematician Arpad Elo, this system establishes the expected result from a game between two rated players, and varies according to the actual result. A GM norm is achieved when a player scores a 2600 rating performance in a tournament (a result such that a 2600 rated player’s rating wouldn’t vary) against at least a 2380 rating average opposition (the average rating of their opponents). More conditions have to be met to make a norm valid, such as scoring the result throughout no less than nine games, facing a minimum number of GMs and titled players, and facing opponents from at least three different federations, amongst some others. On top of requiring an outstanding tournament performance, these little details make attaining norms very difficult. IM norms differ mainly in that the requirements are lower: at least a 2450 rating performance against a 2230 average opposition. Equally, there are similar details concerning the amount of titled players and federations one has to face, that validate IM norms. Some Facts about the Titles The requirements for any chess titles can be fulfilled in any order, within any time span. It’s not necessary to have the required rating at the moment of achieving the norms. Similarly, surpassing the amount of norms doesn’t compensate for the rating requirements. Usually, a player would become an IM, and then chase the GM title. However, there is no obligation to follow this progression. A player who fulfills all the requirements can become a GM without having the IM title. Alternatively, the GM title is conferred automatically (disregarding rating or norms achievement) to the Junior World Champion, the Women’s World Champion, and the Senior World Champion. The IM title too is conferred automatically, upon certain (lower) competitive achievements. FIDE also has awarded an honorific GM title to 31 players for their contribution to chess. In fact, the popular Youtuber Agadmator has a campaign for FIDE to award the honorific GM title to Rashid Nezhmetdinov. There is no distinction between honorary Grandmasters and ‘full Grandmasters’. Over 1950 people have earned the GM title since 1950. The amount of active IMs (players who have competed in official tournaments within the last two years) in 2021 was close to 4000. Women’s chess has a similar titles system (WFM, WIM, and WGM) which require lower conditions than their ‘absolute’ counterparts. Due to women’s reduced participation in professional chess, far fewer are titled: only 317 WGM and 839 WIM. However, women can also become an IM or GM upon achieving the qualifying criteria for those titles. Only 39 women have achieved the GM title. World Champion Nona Gaprindashvili was the first one to do so in 1978, and eighteen have done it since 2010. FIDE can strip a player of their title in the event of a proven cheating incident, which last happened in 2019. Chessable power user Abhimanyu Mishra is the youngest person in achieving both the IM title and the GM title. He became an IM in November 2019, aged 10 years, 9 months and 20 days, beating Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa’s by a full month. In June 2021, he became a GM aged 12 years, 4 months, and 25 days, beating Sergey Karjakin’s record by 65 days. For an interesting and instructive course on one player’s journey from newbie to International Master, check out the Chessable course How I Became an International Master by IM Alan-Safar Ramoutar. Frequently Asked Questions 1. Is Grandmaster better than International Master? Yes. Grandmaster -formerly known as International Grandmaster too- is the highest title FIDE awards. International Master is the title before Grandmaster. 2. What is the difference between an international master and a grandmaster? The difference between both titles lies in the requisites. To qualify for the title of International Master, -usually- a player must reach the 2400 rating mark at least once, and accomplish three IM norms. To qualify for the title of Grandmaster, a player must reach the 2500 rating mark at least once, and accomplish three GM norms (see above for more details on norms). There are shortcuts to both titles, such as winning local competitions by age and honorific titles awarded by FIDE (see above for more details). 3. Can an International Master become a Grandmaster? Yes. International Masters, FIDE Master, and untitled players can become Grandmasters by fulfilling the GM qualifying criteria. It seldom happens that a player leapfrogs the natural progression of international titles, but there is no law against it. 4. How many international grandmasters are there? Currently, there are about 1300 living Grandmasters in the world (not all of them competing actively). Since 1950, FIDE has awarded the GM title to about 2000 people. Chess titles and titled players are referred to quite often in the chess world, but what is the difference between a master and a grandmaster? Let's learn about the different chess titles and how you can earn them! Here is what you need to know about chess titles: What Are Chess Titles? Chess titles are titles awarded to players based on their skill, performance, and rank. A player who has earned a chess title is often referred to as a "titled player" or by their actual title (e.g., grandmaster). Chess titles are awarded by governing chess bodies and federations. The most prestigious titles are conferred by FIDE, while national federations (like US Chess) also have their own titles. If a player has a title, they are extremely strong players and are likely a master. All of the top players in the world are grandmasters (GM), but there are many titles before attaining the GM title. Lots of GMs play on Chess.com on a daily basis. You can find them playing in Live Chess, view their games at Chess.com/games, and read about them at Chess.com/players. All of the top players in the world are GMs. Why Are Chess Titles Important? Chess titles indicate the strength of the best players and quickly display the differences between the various types of masters. For example, if you are watching the Speed Chess Championship Grand Prix and see a national master (NM) playing a grandmaster (GM), you would know from the players' titles alone that the GM is the favorite to win the game against an NM. Only titled players may compete in the Speed Chess Championship Grand Prix. One of the many benefits of becoming a titled player is that you get a lifetime Diamond membership for free on Chess.com! Some of you may be asking, "Well, what are the different titles?" Let's find out! What Are The Different Chess Titles? As mentioned, FIDE awards the most prestigious chess titles. Once earned, these titles are held for life. Here are the eight titles that FIDE awards: Grandmaster The highest title awarded in chess (aside from the title of world champion) is the title of grandmaster. In order to achieve this title, a player must reach an established classical or standard FIDE rating of 2500 and earn three grandmaster norms in international competition. Hikaru Nakamura is a grandmaster. Photo: Maria Emelianova/Chess.com. International Master The international master (IM) title is the second most difficult title to attain. To earn this title, a player must reach an established classical or standard FIDE rating of 2400 and achieve three international master norms in international competition. FIDE Master The FIDE master (FM) title is earned by any player who achieves a classical or standard FIDE rating of 2300 in international competition. No norms are required. Candidate Master The candidate master (CM) title is earned by any player who achieves a classical or standard FIDE rating of 2200 in international competition. No norms are required. Woman Grandmaster The woman grandmaster (WGM) title is exclusive to women and is earned by achieving an established classical or standard FIDE rating of 2300 as well as three WGM norms in international competition. Woman International Master The woman international master title is exclusive to women and is earned by achieving an established classical or standard FIDE rating of 2200. Three norms are required for the WIM title. Woman FIDE Master The woman FIDE master (WFM) title is exclusive to women and is earned by achieving an established classical or standard FIDE rating of 2100. No norms are required. Woman Candidate Master The woman candidate master (WCM) title is exclusive to women and is earned by achieving an established classical or standard FIDE rating of 2000. No norms are required. Alexandra Botez is a Women's FIDE master as well as a popular chess commentator. Photo: Alexandra Botez via Instagram. It is important to note that women can earn any title, whether or not it is a woman's title. In cases where a player has earned more than one title (e.g., IM and WGM), it is up to the player to determine which title they use. It is also worth mentioning that some of these titles (e.g., CM, WFM, and WCM) are awarded for strong results in a national or international event and not solely by the rating criteria above. Chess titles are also awarded by national federations. US Chess, the Chess Federation of Canada, the English Chess Federation, the New Zealand Chess Federation, and other national federations award the title of national master (NM). Most of these federations use a ratings-based system where the NM title is awarded upon reaching a 2200 rating, although some federations differ. Sam Copeland, Chess.com's Director of Content, is a US Chess national master. Photo: Columbia Chess. How To Watch Titled Players On Chess.com It is very easy to watch titled players play games on Chess.com. You can easily identify titled players because their titles are displayed next to their usernames. When you want to watch titled players play, go to Live Chess and select "Events" below the game console. Watch GMs play live on Chess.com. Titled players play in many events on Chess.com, and you can select any titled player in Live Chess whom you want to watch or follow from the events tab. You can find tournament reports about titled players at Chess.com/News and can watch videos and lessons created by titled players at Chess.com/lessons. Conclusion You now know what chess titles are, who awards chess titles, what the different chess titles are, how to watch titled players on Chess.com, and more! Head over to our Play page to watch titled players in action. In chess, players can earn various titles based on their performance and achievements. These titles, such as Grandmaster (GM), International Master (IM), National Master (NM), and FIDE Master (FM), are prestigious and represent the highest levels of accomplishment in the chess community. Chess Titles in Order (GM, IM, NM, FM) Grandmaster (GM): Prestigious title representing the pinnacle of chess achievement. Rating: Typically 2500 and above. International Master (IM): Highly respected title just below Grandmaster. Rating: Typically 2400 and above. FIDE Master (FM): Recognized by the World Chess Federation (FIDE) as a significant accomplishment. Rating: Typically 2300 and above. National Master (NM): Represents mastery at a national level. Rating: Typically 2200 and above in the US (may vary by country). Below we look at the chess titles in order and delve into the requirements and significance of each title. Grandmaster (GM) The title of Grandmaster is the highest title a chess player can achieve. It is awarded by the World Chess Federation (FIDE) and is considered the pinnacle of chess excellence. To become a Grandmaster, a player must meet the following requirements: Attain a FIDE rating of at least 2500. Achieve three Grandmaster norms. A Grandmaster norm is a performance rating achieved in a tournament against other Grandmasters. It is a measure of a player’s ability to compete at the highest level. The norms must be achieved in tournaments that meet specific criteria set by FIDE, such as the number of titled players participating and the average rating of the opponents. Once a player meets these requirements, they can apply to FIDE for the title of Grandmaster. The application process involves submitting the necessary documentation, including tournament results and performance ratings, for review by FIDE. International Master (IM) The title of International Master is the second-highest title in chess, below the Grandmaster title. To become an International Master, a player must meet the following requirements: Attain a FIDE rating of at least 2400. Achieve three International Master norms. Similar to Grandmaster norms, International Master norms are performance ratings achieved in tournaments against other titled players. The norms must be achieved in tournaments that meet specific criteria set by FIDE. Once a player meets these requirements, they can apply to FIDE for the title of International Master. The application process is similar to that of the Grandmaster title, involving the submission of necessary documentation for review. National Master (NM) The title of National Master is awarded by national chess federations and represents a significant achievement within a specific country. The requirements for the National Master title vary from country to country, but they generally include the following: Attain a national rating of a certain level, often around 2200. Achieve a certain number of wins against titled players. Unlike the Grandmaster and International Master titles, the National Master title does not have specific norms that need to be achieved. Instead, it focuses on a player’s performance within their national chess community. FIDE Master (FM) The title of FIDE Master is the lowest of the four titles discussed in this article. To become a FIDE Master, a player must meet the following requirements: Attain a FIDE rating of at least 2300. Achieve two FIDE Master norms. Similar to Grandmaster and International Master norms, FIDE Master norms are performance ratings achieved in tournaments against other titled players. The norms must be achieved in tournaments that meet specific criteria set by FIDE. Once a player meets these requirements, they can apply to FIDE for the title of FIDE Master. The application process is similar to that of the Grandmaster and International Master titles, involving the submission of necessary documentation for review. FAQs – Chess Titles in Order (GM, IM, NM, FM) 1. What is the significance of chess titles? Chess titles are significant as they represent a player’s skill and accomplishment in the game. They serve as milestones and recognition of a player’s dedication and hard work. 2. How many Grandmasters are there in the world? As of [insert year], there are [insert number] Grandmasters in the world. The number of Grandmasters fluctuates over time as new players achieve the title and others retire. 3. Can a player hold multiple chess titles? Yes, a player can hold multiple chess titles. For example, a player can be both a Grandmaster (GM) and an International Master (IM) if they meet the respective requirements for each title. 4. Are there any female-specific chess titles? Yes, there are female-specific chess titles. They are: Woman Grandmaster (WGM) Woman International Master (WIM) Woman FIDE Master (WFM) Woman Candidate Master (WCM) These titles are parallel to the open titles but have lower rating requirements. They were established by FIDE to encourage more female participation in the game. However, many top female players also hold the open titles. Open titles in chess are gender-neutral, and both male and female players can earn them based on their performance and achievements. 5. Can a player lose their chess title? Yes, a player can lose their chess title if their rating drops below the required threshold or if they fail to maintain the necessary performance level in tournaments. However, once a player has achieved a title, they are generally considered to have earned it for life. 6. How long does it take to become a Grandmaster? The time it takes to become a Grandmaster varies from player to player. Some players achieve the title at a young age, while others may take several years or even decades to reach the required level of skill and performance. 7. Are there any age restrictions for earning chess titles? No, there are no age restrictions for earning chess titles. Players of all ages can work towards and achieve the various titles based on their performance and accomplishments. 8. Can a player become a Grandmaster without winning tournaments? Yes, a player can become a Grandmaster without winning tournaments. The Grandmaster title is based on a player’s overall performance and rating, which can be achieved through consistent strong performances against other titled players. 9. Are there any financial benefits to earning chess titles? Earning chess titles can open up opportunities for players to compete in high-level tournaments, which often come with prize money. Additionally, titled players may have access to sponsorship opportunities and coaching positions, which can provide financial benefits. 10. Can a player earn a chess title through online play? Yes, players can earn chess titles through online play. FIDE recognizes online tournaments and performances for the purpose of earning norms and achieving titles, provided they meet the necessary criteria and are conducted in accordance with FIDE regulations. 11. How often are chess titles awarded? Chess titles are awarded on an ongoing basis as players meet the requirements and submit their applications to the respective chess federations or FIDE. The frequency of title awards depends on the number of players achieving the necessary criteria. Yes, there are other chess titles beyond GM, IM, NM, and FM. Some examples include International Arbiter (IA), FIDE Trainer (FT), and Woman Grandmaster (WGM). These titles recognize individuals for their contributions to chess as arbiters, trainers, or female players achieving a high level of performance. 13. Can a player with a lower rating defeat a player with a higher rating? Yes, it is possible for a player with a lower rating to defeat a player with a higher rating. Ratings are not absolute indicators of skill, but rather a measure of a player’s performance relative to other players. Upsets and unexpected results can occur in chess due to various factors such as preparation, tactics, and psychological factors. While chess titles may not be widely recognized outside of the chess community, they hold significant value within the chess world. Titled players are respected and admired for their achievements, and their titles are recognized by chess federations and organizations worldwide. 15. Can a player earn a chess title without playing in international tournaments? Yes, it is possible for a player to earn a chess title without playing in international tournaments. While international tournaments provide opportunities to achieve norms and compete against strong players, players can also earn titles through consistent strong performances in national tournaments or other events that meet the necessary criteria set by the respective chess federations. 16. Is the Grandmaster title in chess based on ELO? Yes, the Grandmaster (GM) title in chess is partially based on Elo rating. To achieve the GM title, a player must fulfill certain criteria set by FIDE, which include: Achieving a FIDE rating of at least 2500 at some point. Earning three Grandmaster norms, which are specific performance criteria in tournaments involving other Grandmasters and International Masters. It’s worth noting that once a player achieves the GM title, it is held for life, regardless of any subsequent changes in their Elo rating. Chess titles are prestigious achievements that represent a player’s skill and accomplishment in the game. The highest title, Grandmaster (GM), requires a FIDE rating of at least 2500 and three Grandmaster norms. The International Master (IM) title requires a FIDE rating of at least 2400 and three International Master norms. The National Master (NM) title varies by country but generally requires a national rating of around 2200 and wins against titled players. The FIDE Master (FM) title requires a FIDE rating of at least 2300 and two FIDE Master norms. These titles serve as milestones for players on their journey to chess excellence and are recognized worldwide. Related