Aprende ajedrez por ti mismo
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Aprende ajedrez por tí mismo (Learn Chessfor Yourself)

This book for children on teaching yourself chess uses characters and an imaginary setting to create a story as the backdrop to learning how to play the game…

Three children narrate the story, nicknamed after important aspects of the game: Linda, called Amazonas (Amazon), Brandon, or Mente Ágil (Quick Thinker), and Rivaldo, Jaque Mate (Check Mate). They are all chess champions in their utopian hometown, the City of Chess, and the time has come for them to meet and play each other, and to determine the overall champion of the city. But the players want all the city's children to be able to follow their championship, and so they invite them to their chess school where they can learn all about it.

In this way, through the book the children introduce all the different features of playing the game, interspersed with its history and lots of extra stories about famous players, and how the game developed and spread around the world. The story and information are also presented with a deeper, subtle but clear, message about how chess can be seen as a metaphor for living in a just and happy community, using the pieces to represent members of society and showing how they all work together to support each other, and how the value of each piece is dependent on all the others. The book also has a positive theme running through it of multi-nationality and different cultures sharing interests and learning from each other and working together, with different races and classes all part of the bigger picture. The book starts very simply but about halfway through begins to address the different strategies of play, and quickly becomes fairly complicated with examples of the moves and how the pieces works together to form an attack or a strategy. Throughout the explanations there are exercises that gradually increase in difficulty as play becomes more complex, so that the reader can practise what the book is teaching as they go along.

For these reasons, the book would easily carry across to another culture, and would be very appropriate for a modern readership, addressing many issues that children are taught in the UK and English-speaking countries today.

One point to consider is that while the subject is complicated for an intended audience that is quite young, the book doesn't feel either patronising or overwhelming, yet doesn't shy away from in-depth analysis of the finer points and strategies. Overall, this book has an appeal that is quite unusual and makes it stand out in its market, yet that market should be a fairly global one. Potentially, it would be successful in translation and in the English-speaking market.

From the reader´s report by .