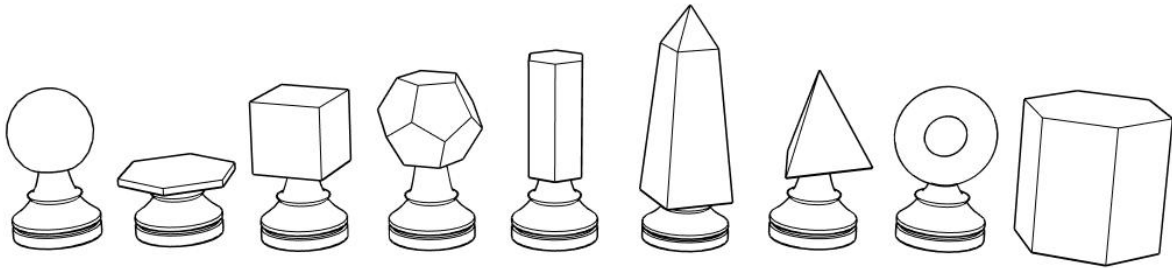


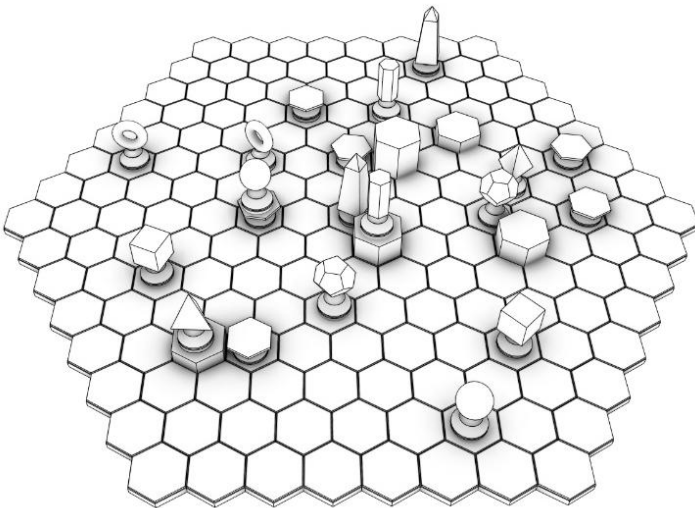
Shah



Shah | Throne | Sardar | Vizier | Stonemason | Spymaster | Assassin | Huntress | Column

I've spent the last few years developing a board game (and its electronic version). The manual has been copyrighted, and the trademark has all but been fully awarded by the USPTO. The game is called Shah, and it's a chess variant played on a hexagonal board.

Like chess, Shah players must attempt to corral and trap their opponent's primary piece before it can reach its goal—the furthest rank from their starting point on the opposite end of the board. If a player's primary piece, the Shah, reaches the farthest row and opponent's starting area, then the game ends and the player who reached this destination has won.



However, if, while in transit, a player's Shah becomes trapped in such a way that it cannot escape the threat of impending capture, the game will end, and the player whose Shah has been corralled loses the game.

There are two major branches of Shah variants. These branches can be defined along their primary difference: dual-phase vs single-phase turns.

This document will cover Classical Shah and thus, dual-phase Shah.

While Shah itself may be considered part of the family of chess variants, it has dynamic features which greatly distinguish it from chess and may afford it

a classification outside of the Chess family.

The following is a list of some of these features:

1. In Shah, the board and playing field uses a hexagonal grid rather than a rectangular or quadrilateral grid. The shape of the board is not fixed in necessity or tradition, players or leagues can change the configuration if they desire. Variations on the classical version of the game covered in this document are allowed for and encouraged.
2. Shah's turn system has two phases—movement and action—and Shah's pieces have special talents that can be used during *action* phases. Players can pass on the action phase but cannot pass on the movement phase. The configuration of the pieces, not just items or status effects placed on the board, must have been changed in some way by the end of the turn.

E.g., moving a piece and pushing it back to its original position is illegal because it does not meet the constraint that the board must show evidence of positional evolution. Tokens – symbols placed on the board to connote a status effect or use of some ability, do not count toward positional evolution.

3. Talents/Abilities allow pieces to manipulate pieces on the board as well as the board itself.
4. A third notable difference is the Column mechanic, in which players can construct and level columns on the board. Columns can be obstacles to movement and abilities, but they can also be directly affected like regular hexes. Columns should be thought of as a *raised hex*.
5. Columns can be mounted by pieces, i.e., columns should be thought of as regular hexes on the board itself that have been raised to become columns, and any pieces (except for Thrones) can be positioned on these raised hexes. When pieces stand atop columns, they are accessing a higher dimension in the game—a third, “pocket” dimension and extension of the playing field which functions according to specialized rules of movement. This third dimension is malleable in terms of its size and shape, and movement across its hexagonal grid works as a kind of translocation mechanic from the perspective of the main grid. The Columns exist in their own dimensions as well as on the main grid, creating a tension between positions on the main board and in the ‘Column dimension.’
6. Another feature differentiating Shah from Chess is the concept of “wards,” a lesser form of “check” which creates a logical requirement for Shahs (the main piece of the game). A Shah cannot move into a ward (hex under lesser threat) of its own volition, but can be pushed into a ward by abilities, or can remain on a hex which only fell under lesser threat after another piece moved. Restated, a Shah can occupy a hex which is currently under the ward condition but cannot traverse to a warded hex of its own volition.
7. The Shah’s *Throne* (Platform) is a piece which can be mounted by the Shah and used as a means of conveyance. Thrones also act as potential nodes in the pocket dimensions formed by networks of other Thrones and Columns. This ability allows the Shah to access the pocket dimension created by Columns as well as to travel networks of other Hexagonal Platforms, whether each node in those networks is friendly or not. This allows the Shah to essentially translocate.
8. Shah players can capture their own pieces! This is considered a *sacrifice*, and if played well, can lead to devastating attacks.
9. The Game of Shah’s talents involve novel concepts for strategic positional games, including repulsion/attraction, transposition, proxying (cloning), stealth, construction, destruction, and removal of board elements.
10. Imperfect Information: Unlike Chess, which has *perfect information*, in which players know the entire state of the game at all times, Shah has hidden information, namely due to the Assassin, which can use its talent, *veil*, to hide its position from the opponent for an indefinite amount of time.
11. Shah’s ruleset allows for the emergence of novel pins and ‘checkmates’ not possible in other chess-like games.
12. The Game of Shah is open to and encourages the existence of piece variants, board variants, and ability variants.

Why “Shah”? In chess, the term “check” is a call “noting one’s move has placed his opponent’s king in immediate peril.” Its etymology comes down from Vulgar Latin *scaccus* via the Arabic and Persian word *shah*, meaning “king.” I chose the name ‘Shah’ as an homage to the Persian and Arabic roots of chess.

Throughout this document I will refer to Shah’s pieces by their basic geometric shapes as well as by their more informal names. These terms should be considered synonymous, though the latter are not fixed and can be exchanged for any terms, allowing players to create their own themes for the pieces of the game while still observing the game’s rules.

The names I use privately come from Persian mythology and are based on the personalities of the pieces—the way they move, and the effects they have on the field of play. But for now, we will use English names based on roles from an imaginary medieval Persian court.

