

PGN Viewer

User Manual

Interactive browser tool for PGN chess files: multi-game selection (including large databases), variations and comments, Stockfish evaluation, FIDE / ECO / Wikipedia links, Chess960, URL parameters with autoplay, HTML export, animated GIFs, and Syzygy links.

Recommendation: open over **http://** or **https://** (not **file://**) so Stockfish, images, lookups, GIF encoding and remote `pgnurl` work reliably.

Document file: `pgn-viewer.pdf` — tool file: `pgn-viewer.html`.

Contents

1. Getting started
2. URL parameters and autoplay
3. Loading large PGN files
4. Game selection and filter
5. Board and navigation
6. Notation, variations and comments
7. Game info (FIDE, ECO, Wikipedia)
8. Stockfish evaluation (SF)
9. Syzygy button
10. Generate GIF
11. Download HTML
12. Published Games
13. Chess960 and special positions
14. Sharing on Facebook and social media
15. Tips and troubleshooting

1. Getting started

Open `pgn-viewer.html` in a modern browser. Choose a `.pgn` file, or open the page with URL parameters (section 2). UTF-8 and Latin-1 (including German umlauts) are supported.

After loading, the board shows the starting position of the selected game. With White at the bottom, a1 is dark. Pieces use the Lichess **cburnett** set.

2. URL parameters and autoplay

The viewer can start without choosing a file by using query parameters:

Parameter	Meaning
pgn	PGN text, URL-encoded
pgnurl or url	HTTP(S) URL of a <code>.pgn</code> file (server must allow CORS)
autoplay	Default on for a single game from a param; set <code>autoplay=0</code> to disable

If the parameter yields **exactly one game**, autoplay starts after load (unless `autoplay=0`). Very long `pgn=` values may hit browser URL length limits — prefer `pgnurl` for larger games.

Example (inline PGN, autoplay):

```
pgn-viewer.html?pgn=%5BEvent%20%22Test%22%5D%0A%5BWhite%20%22A%22%5D%0A%5BBlack%20%22B%22%5D%0A%5BResult%20%221-0%22%5D%0A%0A1.%20e4%20e5%202.%20Nf3%20Nc6%203.%20Bb5%20a6%204.%20Ba4%20Nf6%201-0
```

Example (remote file):

```
pgn-viewer.html?pgnurl=https://example.com/games/one-game.pgn
```

Example (load without autoplay):

```
pgn-viewer.html?pgn=...&autoplay=0
```

3. Loading large PGN files

On load the viewer **indexes** games (boundaries + headers only). Full move trees are built **only when a game is selected**. Progress shows *Indexing n / total...* Large databases become practical compared to parsing every move of every game up front.

Very large files still need time and memory for indexing. The game list shows at most 150 matches — type in the filter to narrow results.

4. Game selection and filter

Games are sorted **newest date first** (YYYY-MM-DD, YYYY.MM.DD and German dd.mm.yyyy are normalized). List labels are **White – Black, result** (not the date). Variant may appear in brackets.

- Type to filter; empty filter matches everything. **x** clears the filter.
- With more than one game, **x/y** appears left of Game info; hidden for a single game.

5. Board and navigation

Click the board to **flip**. The evaluation bar follows. After leaving the start position, the board stays pinned near the top while navigating.

Control	Action
First (far left)	Starting position of the current game
Previous	One move back; from the first move of a variation, returns to the parent line
Play / Pause	Auto-play or pause (~1 second per move)
Next	One move forward
SF (far right)	Toggle Stockfish evaluation / best move

There is **no Last button**. Keyboard: ← previous, → next (when the filter field is not focused).

6. Notation, variations and comments

Moves are listed with variation structure and standard numbering. Annotations (!, ?, !!, ?? and related NAGs) appear next to moves and as badges on the destination square. Comments **before** a move in the PGN are shown before that move; comments **after** a move are shown after it. The result appears at the end of the main line.

7. Game info (FIDE, ECO, Wikipedia)

Expand **Game info** for headers (White, Black, Date, Result, Event, Site, Round, ECO, Opening, Variant, Elo, TimeControl, ...).

FIDE: Player names link to profiles when matched (PGN FIDE ID tags or lookup by name, Elo and year).

ECO: Valid codes A00–E99 link to <https://thomasheyl.de/chess/tools/eco.html?eco=...>

Site: Wikipedia lookup (German first, then English), with common chess-site aliases (e.g. Brünn → Brno). Network required for FIDE and Wikipedia.

8. Stockfish evaluation (SF)

Click **SF** for **Stockfish 18** (lite WASM) and an evaluation bar. The button shows the best move (white/black text on green). Each position is searched about **10 seconds** (go movetime 10000), then stops; navigating starts a new search. Score is from the side at the bottom of the board. Stockfish 19 is not used yet (no simple Worker package).

9. Syzygy button

When the position has ≤ 7 pieces, a green **Syzygy** button appears **below the notation**:

https://thomasheyl.de/chess/tools/syzygy-explorer.html?fen=placement_w_KQkq_e3 (castling / ep when applicable, else -).

10. Generate GIF

Orange **Generate gif**: main-line animation matching the board, header with bold names/result, ~1 s per move, **5 s** on the last frame. Also in exported HTML.

11. Download HTML

- **actual game** — self-contained HTML for the open game.
- **all games** — one HTML for every loaded game (choose a title); filter and x/y when multiple.

Exports include board, notation, variations, comments, auto-play, flip, SF, Game info links, Generate gif, and Syzygy.

12. Published Games

- my best games — thomasheyl.de/chess/games/publish/best/
- my tournaments — thomasheyl.de/chess/games/publish/tournaments/
- other — thomasheyl.de/chess/games/publish/other/

13. Chess960 and special positions

Games with [FEN] / [SetUp "1"] are supported. Chess960-style castling rights are normalized for loading. The board shows the **real start position** from FEN. **O-O / O-O-O** in 960 are applied even when chess.js rejects them, so castling and following moves are kept.

14. Sharing on Facebook and social media

Share the public HTTPS URL of a hosted exported HTML page. Open Graph image: https://thomasheyl.de/images/chesstools_new.png. Use the Facebook Sharing Debugger and Scrape

Again after changes.

15. Tips and troubleshooting

- Local server: `python3 -m http.server 8080` → `http://localhost:8080/`
- Network needed for pieces, Stockfish, FIDE, Wikipedia, ECO, GIF encoder, and remote pgnurl.
- Re-export published HTML after updating the viewer.
- Social networks only read meta tags — they do not run the chess script.
- Large files: wait for indexing; use the filter to find games.
- Pre-move comments in PGN appear before the move; post-move comments after it.