

Minecraft: Impact Guide

For Players

Minecraft is a 2009 sandbox construction video game from Mojang Studios available for the PC, Mac, iOS, Android, and Xbox Live Arcade. Tossed into an open world with no items or equipment, players must make meaning of their own *Minecraft* experience, learning to survive in lands teeming with monsters and ultimately thrive in any way they choose. With only the resources around them as their guide, players can build, farm, and mine as far as their imagination takes them, crafting a wholly unique experience with every game played. Since it became available for purchase in June of 2009, *Minecraft* for the PC/Mac has sold over six million copies. Likewise, it remains the best-selling game on Xbox Live Arcade to date, having surpassed two million copies sold.



How to use this guide: Players – We’ve identified several interesting or important themes in the game. As you play through, reflect on your play. How have you experienced these themes? Are there other important ones present in the game? What kind of impact does your play allow in the larger world? Answer the questions we’ve provided – but feel free to add more at www.gamesandimpact.org.

Warning: Questions contain some spoilers about the games.

Theme: Survival

Minecraft’s primary mode of gameplay is known as Survival Mode, which offers the only clue players have as to their goals when starting a new game. Players must maintain their character’s health meter as well as his hunger bar, which slowly depletes over time. The world around them is populated by hostile creatures, attacking whenever the player is most vulnerable. Faced with death if not properly prepared, the game subtly encourages players to think in terms of survival and act on instinct to avoid an early demise.

Game

- *The game does not offer any hints for what players must do when they begin a new game. Why do you think that is? How does that affect the game as a whole?*
- *What does a player need in order to survive their first night? Their first few weeks? Indefinitely?*
- *Which supplies are the most easily found? The least?*
- *In what ways do Steve’s needs reflect on human needs? Do they accurately represent basic requirements for survival?*

Player

- *What did survival mean to you? What part of surviving was the most important to you?*
- *Did you face any ethical dilemmas in your quest for survival? What were they? How did you react and respond to them?*

- *How closely do you feel the game depicted your idea of what it means to survive? Do you feel it was realistic? Not realistic enough? How would you modify the game better reflect human needs?*

World

- *What are the basic needs that every human must fulfill in order to survive?*
- *What does it mean to survive in modern society? What did it mean to survive a hundred years ago? How has the definition of survival changed over the years?*
- *If you woke up in a world just like in Minecraft, surrounded only by plants and animals, what steps would you take to survive? What necessities would be the most important to you?*

Theme: Sustainability

Easily one of *Minecraft*'s most awe inspiring features is the extensive and near infinite land maps made up of dense forests, swampy jungles, snowy mountains, and vast oceans. Each of these unique biomes is tailored with proper flora, making up a wide range of available organic life in the game. In turn, these drop plantable seeds and saplings allowing for the farming and re-planting of virtually every plant the player comes across. Many of these are only available if farmed for and trees, though seemingly infinite in number, do not grow back unless replanted. Players are faced with the choice of how they will spend and renew the resources around them, forced to think smart and sustainable to achieve a long lasting and resource friendly game environment.

Game

- *How are plants regenerated in the game? How are animals bred?*
- *What other biomes are there? Do they offer viable resources?*
- *What is the relationship between the player and the environment? What role does the player serve in the environment? How does the environment serve the player?*
- *What is the relationship between players and Villagers? Animals? Monsters?*

Player

- *How did the game affect your views on sustainability? Did it change your opinion or reinforce your beliefs?*
- *If you could modify Minecraft around your personal perspectives on sustainability, how would you change it? What would you add or remove?*
- *Did you feel as though replenishing resources through planting and breeding animals contributed to the world you played in? Were your contributions important to your desires for yourself, your character, or your gameworld?*

World

- *What is the importance of mining and farming in the real world? Why are renewable resources important?*

- *Do you think Minecraft can be used to raise awareness about the importance of sustainable living? If so, how would you use it?*
- *In what ways can people act sustainably on a daily basis, much like Steve can in Minecraft?*

Theme: Creation and Destruction

Everything in *Minecraft* exists in terms of 1x1 blocks, which is the rule for both landscape and structures alike. With many different resources and materials to work with, players can plan, create, and build endless amounts of houses, statues, mountains, replicas—anything their imagination could desire. But not everything is safe from the destruction of explosives, fire, lightning, flooding, and even Creepers. Aesthetics and function must be balanced as the player sees fit lest an accident or the environment damage their great creations.

Game

- *Why is crafting important in the game? Are crafting tools, such as the crafting table or furnace, necessary for robust gameplay?*
- *In what ways can blocks, creatures, and creations be destroyed? Was there any point where your creations were destroyed, either partially or fully? How did it happen?*
- *What purpose do NPC villages serve? How can your character interact with them?*
- *How does the game teach the player how to create and destroy? How much is up to the player to learn?*

Player

- *If played in creative mode, how did the unlimited building resources affect the way you approached projects? Did you feel more accomplished creating them in survival mode?*
- *In what ways did the game affect your understanding of architecture and construction? Do you feel as if you know more? Less? Has your play influenced your opinion?*
- *How did you react to the destruction of your creations? What emotions did it evoke? Did you rebuild them? Move on? Why do you think you reacted that way?*

World

- *What kinds of things act as destructive forces in the real world? Can we protect against them? If so, how?*
- *How does the role of architecture and construction fit into our society? How does demolition relate to that?*
- *Is construction and demolition necessarily relative to creation? What other things can creation and destruction apply to, both in Minecraft and in the real world?*