



THE HISTORY OF MINECRAFT

How did a simple building game take the world by storm?

As You Read, Think About: What makes *Minecraft* different from other popular video games?

1 It had no rules or instructions.

When *Minecraft* first came out, it offered players something other games didn't—endless freedom and creativity. The goal of *Minecraft* isn't to score points or complete a quest. It has no time limit, like the Madden NFL or FIFA series. It has no levels, like the Mario games.

Instead, players step into a vast digital world. They figure out how the game works as they explore. And they can build just about anything they can imagine.

You drop into a world of forests, mountains, and swamps. It's all made of blocks. Soon you begin mining for bricks and stone to build a home. Chickens and pigs wander by. Night falls, and a group of creepers appears out of nowhere. Luckily, you have a diamond sword to fight them off.

If this scene sounds familiar, you've probably played *Minecraft*. It's the top-selling video game of all time.

Since it was released 10 years ago, the simple building game has sold more than 176 million copies.

For gamers, it's hard to imagine a world without it.

"*Minecraft* changed everything that came after it," says Mizuko Ito. She is an expert on how kids use video games.

Here are five reasons the game became a worldwide hit.

WORDS TO KNOW

collaborate *verb.* to work with another person or in a group to achieve a goal

replica *noun.* an exact copy or model of something

2 It spawned a huge online community.

Minecraft has brought together people of all ages like no other video game before it. Players don't compete against each other. They swap ideas and collaborate.

Players can join the same *Minecraft* world as their friends—whether they're across the street or across the globe. They can form teams to mine materials like iron and redstone. Then they can work together to build never-ending worlds they couldn't have created on their own.

3 It turned players into YouTube stars.

Today, YouTube is loaded with gamer videos. That all started with *Minecraft*. There are close to 1.3 million *Minecraft* videos on the video-sharing site. That's more than twice as many as any other game.

Players create videos to give tips on the game. They also show off their creations or just make viewers laugh. Videos made by the most popular *Minecrafters*, such as Stampy Cat, have been viewed billions of times.

4 Teachers let kids play it in school!

Minecraft is used in classrooms around the world. The game helps teach everything from science and math to history. Students can build a replica of the White House as they learn about government. They can assemble a block version of our galaxy as they study space.

Teachers who use the game say it helps students learn important skills, such as problem solving and coding.

5 It will never be finished.

A decade after it first came out, *Minecraft* is still wildly popular. About 90 million people play it each month. The game is updated frequently with new creatures and features. Pandas and bamboo are some of the latest.

Yet *Minecraft* remains a simple, block-filled land of endless possibilities—and no clear ending. Players come together to create, and no one wins or loses.

"That's really the magic of *Minecraft*," says Ito.

—by Jennifer Li Shotz



WHAT IS MINECRAFT EARTH?

This new mobile game is similar to the popular game *Pokémon Go*. You use a map on a phone to collect *Minecraft* resources in real-life locations and then use them to build whatever you want. You can even make your creations appear full-size and walk around in them.

What Do You Think?

Kids ages 8 to 12 spend an average of **1 hour and 19 minutes** playing video games each day.* Some experts say that's too much. In what ways can video games be helpful? How can they be harmful?

*Source: Common Sense Media