THE ULTIMATE PLAYER'S GUIDE TO MINECRAFT

PLAYSTATION EDITION

FULL COLOR
Covers PlayStation 3 and 4

UNOFFICIAL GUIDE

STEPHEN O'BRIEN

FREE SAMPLE CHAPTER
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The Ultimate Player's Guide to Minecraft: 
PlayStation Edition

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# Contents at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1</td>
<td>Getting Started</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2</td>
<td>First-Night Survival</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 3</td>
<td>Gathering Resources</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 4</td>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 5</td>
<td>Combat School</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 6</td>
<td>Crop Farming</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 7</td>
<td>Farming and Taming Mobs</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 8</td>
<td>Creative Construction</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 9</td>
<td>Redstone, Rails, and More</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 10</td>
<td>Enchanting, Anvils, and Brewing</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 11</td>
<td>Villages and Other Structures</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 12</td>
<td>Playing Through: The Nether and The End</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Index</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table of Contents

Introduction  1
  What’s In This Book  1
  How to Use This Book  3
  Crafting Recipes  3

Chapter 1  Getting Started  5
  Starting a New Game  6
    More Options  11
    Single-Player Game Modes  13
  Hosting and Controlling Multiplayer Games  15
  Understanding World Seeds  19
  Controls  19
  The Bottom Line  21

Chapter 2  First-Night Survival  23
  Surviving and Thriving  23
  Heading for the Trees  25
  Using Your Inventory  26
  Building a Crafting Table  28
    Let’s Build Some Tools  30
    Creating a Shelter  31
    The Furnace Is Your Friend  35
    Let There Be Light  36
    Slumbering with Lumber  38
  The Bottom Line  41

Chapter 3  Gathering Resources  43
  Introducing the HUD  43
  Avoiding Getting Lost  46
  Improving Your Tools  47
  Chests: Safely Stashing Your Stuff  49
  Avoiding Monsters  51
  Hunger Management  53
**Your Mission: Food, Resources, and Reconnaissance** 54
  - Food on the Run 56
  - Finding a Building Site 58
**A Resourceful Guide to the Creative Mode Inventory** 61
  - The Bottom Line 63

**Chapter 4 Mining** 65
  - Dig Deep, My Friend 65
  - The Mining Layer Cake Guide 67
  - Lava Lakes and Other Pitfalls 69
  - Descending to Layer 11 70
    - The 2×1 Ladder Descent 71
    - The Straight Staircase 73
    - The Spiral Staircase 74
  - Layouts for Fast, Efficient Mining 75
  - Staying Safe While You Mine 78
  - The Bottom Line 79

**Chapter 5 Combat School** 81
  - Introducing the Menagerie 81
    - Zombies 82
    - Spiders 83
    - Skeletons 85
    - Cave Spiders 86
    - Spider Jockeys 87
    - Creepers 88
    - Slimes 89
    - Endermen 90
    - Zombie Pigmen 90
  - Defensive Mobs 91
    - Snow Golems 91
    - Iron Golems 92
  - Weapons and Armor 93
    - Swordcraft 94
    - Bows and Arrows 94
Chapter 6  Crop Farming  103
Choosing a Crop  103
Finding Seeds in Elysium  106
Establishing a Wheat Farm  108
Automated Farms  114
Creating a Piston Harvester  118
Sticky Piston Harvesting  120
Creating a Water Harvester  121
Harvesting Other Crops  124
The Bottom Line  125

Chapter 7  Farming and Taming Mobs  127
Farming and Working with Friendly Mobs  127
Breeding Animals  130
Riding Pigs  133
Fishing  133
The Bottom Line  134

Chapter 8  Creative Construction  137
Leaving the Cave  137
Unleashing Your Interior Decorator  140
Building Underwater  147
Protecting Your Perimeter  153
Becoming a Ditch Witch  153
Mob Pitfalls  155
Thick as a Brick  157
The Bottom Line  157

Chapter 9  Redstone, Rails, and More  159
Power Sources  160
Redstone Wiring  163
## Chapter 11 Villages and Other Structures 207

- **Village Life** 207
- **Emerald City: Your Ticket to Trade** 210
- **Other Structures** 212
  - Desert Temples 213
  - Jungle Temples 214
  - Dungeons 215
  - Abandoned Mineshafts 216
  - Strongholds 216
  - Nether Fortresses 217
- **Mapping, or There and Back Again** 217
- **Crafting a Clock** 218
- **The Bottom Line** 219

## Chapter 12 Playing Through: The Nether and The End 221

- **Alternate Dimensions** 221
- **Getting to The Nether** 224
  - Portal Magic 225
- **Surviving the Nether Fortress** 229
- **Nether Mobs** 230
- **The End Game** 232
  - Finding a Stronghold 234
  - Defeating the Ender Dragon 237
- **The Bottom Line** 241

## Index 243
Stephen O'Brien is an Australian-born writer and entrepreneur currently residing in Sydney after too many years in Silicon Valley. He has written more than 30 books across multiple editions with publishers such as Prentice Hall and Que, including several best-selling titles. He also founded Typefi, the world’s leading automated publishing system, and in his spare time he invented a new type of espresso machine called mypressi. He has been using Minecraft since its early betas and remains astounded at the unparalleled creativity it engenders. Stephen is also the author of The Advanced Minecraft Strategy Guide, published by Que.
Dedication

To Mika, who with every new title turns first to the dedication page, and remains ever thrilled. Here’s another my darling boy, and I hope many more to come.

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Many thanks are also due to Alex Barry for a copious technical edit and extensive contributions.

Finally, to Minecrafters everywhere who have taken to the PlayStation edition of this amazing sandbox in quite astonishing numbers.
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Introduction

When Minecraft launched as a downloadable on the PlayStation, it broke all kinds of records. For very good reason.

Having already become gaming’s largest indie success on the PC and Mac, there was something, to say the least, of a pent-up demand to see it on console.

We saw something similar with the release of The Ultimate Player’s Guide to Minecraft. There are numerous subtle and not-so-subtle differences between the game in its Java form on PC and Mac and the edition released for the PlayStation, and many readers clamored for more specific guidance.

With that in mind, we completely overhauled the book from top to tail, producing the first PlayStation-specific Minecraft title, with in-depth tutorials and detailed information on every mob, crop, enchantment, and potion.

If you’ve played through the in-game tutorial, you’ll have learned some of the game’s basic mechanics, but this book goes far beyond. From survival tips and tricks to the best places to find key resources. From redstone to railways, combat and defense, automated farming, brewing potions, casting enchantments, and a lot more besides, you’ll find yourself getting more out of Minecraft than you ever thought possible.

Use this book to guide you through your own generated world, or create one with the included seed to play alongside me as we find villages and natural resources, create a crop farm, travel far to the North to gather cocoa beans, build up our armory, then go to The Nether and back again, find a stronghold, enter The End region, and defeat its formidable boss: the Ender Dragon.

It’s going to be quite a journey, and one that’s perfect for all ages.

What’s In This Book

Survive and thrive in Minecraft with 12 chapters of detailed step-by-step guides, tips, tricks, and strategies. Each chapter in this book focuses on a key aspect of the game, from initial survival to building an empire. Make the most of your Minecraft world today:

- Chapter 1, “Getting Started,” walks you through the various new game settings and options including texture packs and multiplayer. You also learn how seeds control world generation, including the one used throughout this book, so you can learn Minecraft in the same environment.
Chapter 2, “First-Night Survival,” is an essential strategy guide to one of the most challenging times in Minecraft. You learn to craft essential tools, create torches, build your first mob-proof shelter, and reset your spawn point, all in less than 10 minutes of gameplay.

Chapter 3, “Gathering Resources,” teaches you everything you need to know about the heads-up display and how to fill out the skills you need to build a permanent base of operations, craft better tools, store resources, and find food to stave off hunger. I also show you how to use the built-in GPS so you can always find your way home, even after extended forays into the wilds, and I give you a complete guide to the Creative inventory.

Chapter 4, “Mining,” unlocks some of Minecraft’s deepest secrets. I show you the best tunneling plan to uncover the most resources in the shortest possible time, the essential tools required, and the layers you should dig to uncover everything from basic iron ore to diamonds.

Chapter 5, “Combat School,” gets you ready to tackle any mob, including the creeper. From sword-fighting techniques to armor, this chapter has you covered. Slice and dice your way through Minecraft. You also learn essential perimeter protection strategies for your home and how to build snow and iron golems for additional defense.

Chapter 6, “Crop Farming,” helps you become completely self-sufficient, ensuring the hunger bar stays full, constantly boosting your health. Learn to hydrate 80 blocks of farmland with a single water block and automate your harvests at the touch of a button.

Chapter 7, “Farming and Taming Mobs,” is all about Minecraft’s passive animals: the chickens, pigs, cows, and more that populate its world and provide you with instant BBQ. Learn to breed animals, tame ocelots to scare off creepers, and get a wolf pack on your side.

Chapter 8, “Creative Construction,” helps you unleash your inner architect. From grand constructions to inventive interiors, learn about the decorative ways you can use Minecraft’s blocks and items to build the perfect abode. Then knock it all down and build something better!

Chapter 9, “Redstone, Rails, and More,” empowers your world with a host of automated devices. Control redstone power and automated doors; send minecarts on missions; and build stations, stopovers, and more. Soon you’ll be able to zoom across the plains, careen through underground tunnels, and scare the heck out of guests on a knife-edged rollercoaster ride.

Chapter 10, “Enchanting, Anvils, and Brewing,” gets you brewing up a storm. Cast spells, improve your weapons and armor, and fall from great heights with grace. Believe me, you’ll need this in The End region.
Chapter 11, “Villages and Other Structures,” gets you rampaging around the nonplaying characters and introduces you to dungeons, strongholds, and nether fortresses.

Chapter 12, “Playing Through: The Nether and The End,” is the strategy guide you’ll need to get through these tricky sections of the game. Find a fortress fast, get what you need, and then prepare for the Ender Dragon. It’s easy when you know how.

How to Use This Book
Throughout this book, you’ll see that I have called out some items as Notes, Tips, and Cautions—all of which are explained here.

**NOTE**
Notes point out ancillary bits of information that are helpful but not crucial. They often make for an interesting meander.

**TIP**
Tips point out a useful bit of information to help you solve a problem. They're useful in a tight spot.

**CAUTION**
Cautions alert you to potential disasters and pitfalls. Don’t ignore these!

Crafting Recipes
You’ll also see that I’ve included crafting recipes throughout this book. I’ve included the actual ingredients in the text, so you can ensure you have what you need before making a trip to the crafting table.
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Gathering Resources

In This Chapter

- Learn the secrets of the HUD.
- Improve your tools with more durable materials.
- Safely store your hard-earned resources.
- Learn the easy way to manage hunger.
- Build your first outdoor shelter and enjoy the view.
- Access the full Creative mode inventory.

Minecraft is filled to the brim with all manner of resources, and gathering them is the first step toward getting the most out of the game. In Chapter 2, “First-Night Survival,” you put together a pack of essentials sufficient to last the first night, but this is really just the smallest prequel to the real game, and describing how to find, create, and use other types of resources forms much of this book. This chapter is about building the foundation you can use to launch into the rest of the game. Your focus is on a few key points: build an outdoor shelter, find food to stave off hunger, improve your collection of tools, and build a chest to safely store items. This solidifies your position (making your base more impervious to attack), allows you to do all sorts of Minecrafty things more efficiently, and sets you up for longer excursions both above and below ground.

The good news is that you already have a base, so you can explore during the day, try not to lose your way, and head back at night. However, you still need to avoid at least some of the hostile mobs that persist during the day.

Introducing the HUD

Before we start, let’s take a look at the Heads-Up Display (HUD)—that collection of icons and status bars at the bottom of the screen. Figure 3.1 shows the HUD as it appears in Survival mode with all possible indicators displayed. (The Creative mode HUD shows only the Inventory bar.)
FIGURE 3.1 The HUD provides key status indications. Health is all important, but low hunger also leads to low health, so keep a close eye on both.

1. Armor bar
2. Health bar
3. Experience bar
4. Oxygen bar
5. Hunger bar
6. Hotbar

Each section of the HUD provides a key nugget of information about the health or status of your avatar:

- **Armor bar**—The armor bar appears when you’ve equipped your avatar with any type of armor and shows the current damage absorption level. Each armor icon represents an 8% reduction in the damage you’ll take, so a 10/10 suit of armor reduces the damage you take by 80%, whereas a 1/10 suit absorbs only 8%. Armor becomes less effective the more damage it has taken, although the rate at which it deteriorates also depends on its material—leather being the weakest and diamond the strongest. In the case shown in Figure 3.1, a set of leather boots really doesn’t provide much protection.

- **Health bar**—You have up to 20 points of health available, represented by the 10 hearts shown. Each heart disappears in two ticks. Health and hunger have a complicated relationship. You can read more about them starting in the section “Hunger Management.”

- **Experience bar**—The experience bar increases the more you mine, smelt, cook, kill, and fish. Your current level is shown in the middle of the bar. When it’s full, you move to the next experience level. Experience isn’t generally important until you start enchanting and giving additional powers to items such as swords (see Chapter 10, “Enchanting, Anvils, and Brewing”). Unlike other roleplaying games, experience in Minecraft is more like a currency that you spend on enchantments, so it waxes and wanes. But all experience gained counts toward the final score shown on the screen when you die. Killing a mob drops experience orbs that either fly directly toward you or float to the ground waiting
to be collected. You can also gain experience by smelting certain items in the furnace and carrying out other activities such as finding rare ores. Dying causes a substantial drop in your current experience level, so if you start to gain substantial experience points (for example, a level that’s up in the 20s), it might be time to think about spending them on an enchantment or two.

- **Oxygen bar**—The oxygen bar appears whenever you go underwater, and it quickly starts to drop. You can probably hold your own breath for longer! As soon as your oxygen level hits zero, your health starts taking a two-point hit every second, but it resets if you resurface for just an instant. You can do this by holding down the button until you breach the water. Diving isn’t that big of a deal in Minecraft, at least not for completing the core game, but you can use the ability to do interesting things like building an underwater base. An example is shown in Figure 3.2, and I’ll show you how to build your own in Chapter 8, “Creative Construction,” as well as sharing with you some other underwater breathing techniques.

- **Hunger bar**—You also have 20 points of hunger available, as well as a hidden value called Saturation. Like health, each hunger bar icon holds 2 points and can reduce by half an icon (that icon is, incidentally, a “shank,” or the lower part of a leg of meat) at a time.
Hotbar—These nine slots represent items you can select and use. Press \( A \) to access your full inventory and to change the items in these slots. The white number next to some shows that slot’s count of stacked identical items. A durability bar also appears under each tool’s icon in green, gradually reducing as you use the tool until the tool breaks and disappears from your inventory. You’ll have some warning of this because the bar turns red when it’s close to zero. See “Improving Your Tools” later in the chapter to learn more about the durability of various materials.

NOTE

Hiding the HUD

If you want to hide the HUD, press \( B \) to open the Help & Options menu. Scroll down to SettingsÆUser Interface and deselect Display HUD. Unfortunately, there isn’t a quicker way to do this at present.

Avoiding Getting Lost

It’s easy to become lost in Minecraft. Run helter-skelter from your base, chase a herd of livestock, discover a natural cave system, or take a shot across the sea like that famed Norseman Leif Eriksson. It’s all part of the Minecraft charm. But don’t become Columbus in the process.

You’ll find a map in your inventory that can help you return to your home base or other locations in the world (see Figure 3.3). The map can display the entire world on the PS3 edition (it takes more than one on the PS4 edition) but only updates while you have it active in the Hotbar, so it will take some time for it to build up the big picture. However, it does provide coordinates. Take note of those displayed for your home base.

The coordinates are based on the world’s center where X and Z equal 0. (Y shows your current level above bedrock.) Jot down the current values. If you become lost, you can always find your way back to your original spawn and, presumably, your first shelter by traveling in a direction that will bring both X and Z back to those noted values.

When you need to return—and I should warn you that this can take some experimentation and a little practice—turn and take a few steps while tracking the change in your current coordinates. Your goal is to shift those X and Z values back toward those you originally recorded. You’ll probably wander around a bit, but eventually you’ll get there and the map will help you get your orientation and head off in the right general direction.

When you are able, craft a compass. It takes some redstone and iron, and both are relatively easy to obtain with some assiduous mining. The only problem with a compass is that
it always points to your original world spawn point. Think of that point as the magnetic north pole—it’s not a GPS. Sleeping in a bed resets your spawn point but not your compass, so this method falls out of date as soon as you move to new dwellings and update your spawn point.

A compass is actually more useful when transformed into a map, see “Mapping, or There and Back Again” on page 217. You might need to do that if you lose the original map.

Improving Your Tools

Wooden tools wear out fast, so it’s best to upgrade your kit as quickly as possible.

Each type of material has a different level of durability. Think of durability as the number of useful actions the tool can perform before it wears out completely, disappearing in a sudden splintering of wood. I’ve included the durability in parentheses after each material’s description:

- **Gold (33)**—Although this is the least durable material, a gold pickaxe can break blocks out of most softer materials in the blink of an eye, and it happens to be the most enchantable material, so you can imbue it with superpowers (see Chapter 10). But given that gold is about five times as rare as iron, and gold can be used to craft many other useful items, I wouldn’t recommend using it for tools.

- **Wood (60)**—It’s easy to obtain, especially in an emergency aboveground, but think of wood as just a means of getting to cobblestone because, unlike the latter, wooden tools
can’t mine the more valuable ores such as iron, gold, diamond, and redstone. You will at least need a wooden pickaxe to mine stone because doing so with your bare hands will just break the stone into unusable dust, but after that, swap it out for something tougher.

- **Stone (132)**—With just a touch over twice the longevity of wood, stone makes a great starting point for more serious mining and other activities such as slaying mobs. Stone tools are built from cobblestone blocks, which in turn come from stone. That might seem a little confusing, but it will seem natural enough after a while.

- **Iron (251)**—Iron will become your go-to material. It is found most commonly all the way from bedrock, the lowest layer of the Minecraft world, up to about 20 levels below sea level. Iron is used for building all kinds of tools, implements, and devices including armor, buckets (for carrying water, lava, and milk), compasses, minecarts, and minecart tracks. All these require at least iron ingots obtained by smelting the ore in a furnace, with each block of ore producing one ingot. Ingots and many other items are found scattered throughout the world in village chests, mine shafts, dungeons, and strongholds. You might also find them as drops from slain zombies and iron golems—although I definitely don’t recommend tackling the latter.

- **Diamond (1562)**—It’s the strongest material of all but also the most expensive given that diamonds are relatively rare. (You will enjoy the moment you do find your first diamond, but it’s found only in the first 16 layers above bedrock, the lowest layer in the Minecraft world, and even then it’s about 25 times as scarce as iron.) A diamond pickaxe is the only material that can successfully mine obsidian, a material required for creating the portal to reach The Nether region. Given that diamond is much scarcer than iron but only six times as durable, you should use iron pickaxes as much as possible and only switch to diamond when you need to mine obsidian to reach The Nether. You’re better off saving any diamonds you find for weapons (a diamond sword does more damage, and that combined with its increased durability will ensure it lasts much longer than any other material while doing more damage where it counts), armor, and enchantment tables.

**NOTE**

Different Materials for Different Items

Durability applies to all tools, weapons, and armor, although there are differences in the materials that can be used in each case. For example, you can craft leather armor and make stone tools, but not vice versa.
The recipes for crafting tools from all materials are identical, save for the replacement of the head of the implement with the material of choice. As long as you have the right materials, that version of the tool appears selectable in the crafting interface:

- To make a stone pick, you need two wooden sticks for the handle and three cobblestone blocks.

![Crafting recipe for stone pick](image)

- Replace in the same way for the axe and the sword.

![Crafting recipe for stone axe](image) ![Crafting recipe for stone sword](image)

- You might also want to add a shovel to your collection because it’s about four times faster than using hands to harvest softer materials such as dirt, gravel, sand, clay, and snow, and it helps some of those blocks deliver resources rather than just breaking down. For example, only a shovel can gather snow balls from snow.

![Crafting recipe for stone shovel](image)

As you craft more items, you need to find somewhere to store those you don’t need to use right away. You should also store other resources and food you find on your travels so they’re not lost if you come to an unfortunate end. That comes next.

**Chests: Safely Stashing Your Stuff**

Whenever you head away from your secure shelter, there is always a reasonably high risk of death. Creepers, lava pits, long falls—they can all do you in. Respawning is only a moment away, but the real danger here is that any items you’ve collected and carry in your character’s inventory drop at the location of your untimely death and may prove impossible to retrieve in the 5 minutes you have to get back to them before they disappear forever.
Chests act as an insurance policy. Put everything you don’t need in a chest before you embark on a mission, and those things will be there when you get back or after you respawn.

The natural place to leave chests is in your shelter, but you can also leave them elsewhere, perhaps at a staging point as you work away in a mine or even outside. Mobs will leave them alone, and the only real risk you face is leaving them out in the open in a multiplayer game or getting blown up from behind by a creeper in Single-player mode while you’re rummaging around inside.

Chests come in two sizes: single and double. A single chest can store 27 stacks of items. Create a double chest by placing two single chests side by side. The double chest stores up to 54 stacks of items. Given that a stack can be up to 64 items high, that’s an astonishing potential total of 3,510 blocks in a crate that takes just 2×1 blocks of floor space. If you’ve ever followed the *Dr. Who* TV series, consider chests the Tardis of storage!

Create a chest at your crafting table with eight blocks of wooden planks.

Place and then use `L` to open it. You can then move items back and forth between your inventory and the chest. In Figure 3.4, I’ve transferred all the items I don’t need for the next expedition.

**FIGURE 3.4** Chests act as an insurance policy for your items so they aren’t lost if you die. Use the inventory shortcuts you learned earlier to quickly move items between your active inventory and the chest’s storage slots.
Before you head out, there are two other things you should know: how to avoid monsters and how to deal with hunger. Read on.

Avoiding Monsters

There’s a key difference between the Minecraft world on the first and second days. In a word, mobs: hostile ones to be specific. Mobs spawn only in dark areas, and some only during the night, so if you are outside during your first day and stay in well-lit areas, you’ll be reasonably—although not entirely—safe. By the second day, however, mobs have had a chance to build their numbers and wander about. It’s not that likely you’ll encounter them on day 2, but it’s best to be prepared.

There are 14 types of hostile mobs. These are the ones you might meet on your second day outside:

- **Zombies**—Zombies burn up in sunlight but can still survive in shadows or rain, when wearing a helmet, and of course in caves all hours of the day or night. They are relatively easy to defeat, and if too many come after you from out of the shadows, just head to a well-lit area and keep your distance while they burn up in the sun.

- **Skeletons**—Skeletons also burn up in sunlight unless they are wearing a helmet, and they can survive at any time in lower light conditions. They’re quite deadly with a bow and arrow and best avoided for now.

- **Spiders**—Spiders come in two variants: large or blue. You’ll probably only see the larger spiders at this stage. They are passive during the day but become hostile in shadow and can attack at any time if provoked. They’ll climb, they’ll jump, and they are pretty darn fast. Fortunately, they’re also easy to kill with some swift sword attacks. The blue spiders are a smaller, poisonous variant called cave spiders. They live only in abandoned mine shafts underground, but in substantial numbers. If you suffer from arachnophobia, I don’t have much good news for you, except that with a little time you’ll get used to them and they won’t seem quite so nasty.

- **Creepers**—Creepers have a well-earned reputation as the Minecraft bad guys. They are packed to their green gills with gunpowder, and they’ll start their very short 1.5-second fuse as soon as they are within three blocks of you. Their explosions can cause a lot of real damage to you, nearby structures, and the environment in general. If you hear a creeper’s fuse—a soft hissing noise—but can’t see it, run like heck in the direction you’re facing. Remember to sprint by pushing your forward twice in quick succession. With a little luck, you’ll get three blocks away and the creeper’s fuse will reset. Creepers are usually best dealt with using a ranged attack from a bow and arrow, but if you sprint at them with an iron or diamond sword and take a swipe at just the right moment, mid-leap, when you’re past the apex of the arc and descending in a wild fury, you can send
them flying back out of their suicidal detonation range, causing the fuse to reset. Most
creepers despawn (that is, disappear) around noon, leaving the afternoon generally free
of their particular brand of terror.

- **Slimes**—Slimes spawn in the swamp biome and in some places underground. Their
initial appearance is that of a quite large Jello-like green block, but they won’t sit there
gently shaking: they are more than capable of causing real damage. Attacking eventu-
ally breaks them up into 2–4 new medium-sized slimes. These can still attack but are
relatively easily killed, only to spawn a further 2–4 tiny slimes each! These last kind don’t
cause any attack damage, but they can still push you into peril if you’re unlucky.

If you come across a lone spider, a zombie, or even a slime, now is as good a time as any to
get in some sword practice. Just point your crosshairs at the creature and strike repeatedly
with \[ R2 \]. Timed well, you can also block their attacks with \[ L2 \]. Keep clicking as fast as you
can, and you have a very good chance of killing the mob and picking up any items it drops
before it lands too many blows. Try to avoid the other mobs for now.

---

**TIP**

**Switch to Peaceful Mode to Get a Break**

Getting mobbed by mobs? Remember that you can always exit the game and reen-
ter it, changing the Difficulty setting to Peaceful as you open the game once more.
Peaceful mode despawns all hostile mobs and allows your health to regenerate. But
do try to switch the level back to Normal as soon as you can.

So how do you avoid mobs? Use these tips to survive:

- **Stay** in the open as much as you can, avoiding heavily wooded areas if possible.

- Most mobs have a 16-block detection radar. If they can also draw a line of sight to
your position, they will enter *pursuit* mode. (Spiders can always detect you, even through
other blocks.) At that point they’ll relentlessly plot and follow a path to your position,
tracking you through other blocks without requiring a line of sight. Pursuit mode stays
engaged much farther than 16 blocks.

- Keep your sound turned up because you’ll also hear mobs within 16 blocks, although
creepers, befitting their name, are creepily quiet.

- Avoid skirting along the edges of hilly terrain. Creepers can drop on you from above
with their fuses already ticking. Try to head directly up and down hills so you have a
good view of the terrain ahead.
Mobs are quite slow, so you can easily put some distance between them and yourself by keeping up a steady pace and circling around to get back to your shelter. Sprint mode will leave them far behind.

**CAUTION**

_Sprint Mode Makes You Hungry_

Sprint mode burns up hunger points, so try to use it only in emergencies. Unfortunately, in a real emergency, if you make a dash from a creeper when your health is low, you’ll find it impossible to sprint. Remember, always keep your hunger topped up so your health continually regenerates and you’ll avoid getting caught in this leaden-footed nightmare.

**Hunger Management**

Hunger plays a permanent role in Minecraft, much as in real life. While it’s possible to starve to death only on Hard difficulty, hunger does affect your character in other ways, so it’s always important to ensure you have the equivalent of a couple of sandwiches packed before heading deep into a mine or on a long trek.

Hunger is a combination of two values: the one shown in the HUD’s hunger bar, as well as a hidden value called _saturation_. The latter provides a buffer to the hunger bar, decreasing first. In fact, your hunger bar doesn’t decrease at all until saturation reaches 0. At that point, you see the hunger bar start to jitter, and after a short while it takes its first hit. Saturation cannot exceed the value of the hunger bar, so with a fully satiated bar of 20 points, it’s possible to have up to 20 points of saturation. However, a hunger level of 6 points also only provides a maximum of 6 points of saturation, and that makes you vulnerable.

You’ll find some key information about the hunger system here:

- On Easy and Normal Survival modes, your character won’t drop dead from hunger, although it can still pose a danger because your health won’t regenerate if hunger has dropped more than 2 points from its maximum. If you’re close to home and pottering around in your farm or constructing some building extensions, you’re fairly safe, but your health _will_ start to drop. Eat something as soon as you can to rebuild your hunger bar and therefore your health.

- Sprinting and jumping up blocks both cost hunger points. Also, sprinting becomes impossible when the hunger bar drops below six hunger points, or three shanks, as shown in the HUD.
Keeping a relatively full stomach at 18 hunger points (9 shanks in the HUD) allows health to regenerate at 1 point (half a heart) every 4 seconds.

Health depletes if the hunger bar drops to zero, increasing the risk of dying from one of the many imaginative ways on offer in Minecraft’s deadly smorgasbord (see Figure 3.5).

FIGURE 3.5 The effects of extreme hunger on Normal difficulty: health depletes to just one point, or half a heart.

There are some limits to the amount health can drop that vary according to the difficulty level. On Easy, health cannot deplete from hunger further than 10 points, or half the full quotient. On Normal, it can drop to 1 point, which is an extreme level of vulnerability. On Hard, there are no limits; don’t ignore the hunger bar, or death from starvation could be just moments away. See “Food on the Run” later in this chapter to avoid this unfortunate fate.

Your Mission: Food, Resources, and Reconnaissance

Your second day is the perfect opportunity to gather food and other resources and to take a quick survey of the landscape surrounding your first shelter, in particular to find somewhere suitable for your first outdoor abode. Keep an eye out for any of the following:

- **Passive mobs**—Chickens, pigs, and cows all provide a ready source of food, or at least raw protein that can be cooked on the furnace and made more nutritious. Cows also drop leather that you can use for your first armor and can be milked, giving you an
instant cure for food poisoning. Chickens also lay eggs, which are used to make cake, so gather any that you find. You can also obtain feathers from killed chickens—useful for later crafting arrows.

- **Natural harvest**—The harvest includes cocoa pods, apples, sugar cane, carrots, potatoes, and seeds. Knock down tall grass to find seeds; then use a hoe to till some ground next to water. Seeds mature into wheat within 5–8 day/night cycles, although wheat, potatoes, and carrots are also grown by villagers, as you can see with the wheat crop shown in Figure 3.6. From wheat, it’s easy to bake bread, one of the simplest but most effective sources of food, especially if there are no passive mobs nearby. When combined with cocoa pods, bread will make cookies, which are always useful for a quick hunger bar top-up. See Chapter 6, “Crop Farming,” for more on agricultural techniques.

- **Construction resources**—You can mine plenty of cobblestone quite safely by expanding your original shelter, digging into the terrain. But some other resources will definitely come in handy. Wood is always useful. If you see any sand, mine it so you can smelt it into glass blocks to let light into your shelter and provide a view. (There’s no point moving from your first cave into the outdoor equivalent of another!) Also keep an eye out for coal. You can often see it in veins on the surface of the walls of small caves or on the sides of cliffs. If you can safely get to it, make like a miner and dig it out. Use the coal to make torches and to smelt other ores.

**FIGURE 3.6** Wheat is an easy crop to farm and then to turn into bread—a handy food if you’re stuck with no other options.
TIP
Making Use of Bones

The morning sun burns up skeletons, leaving behind bones that you can craft into bone meal. Bone meal acts as a fertilizer, helping your crops grow faster. You can also use bone to tame wolves, providing you with an extra level of protection. Chapter 7, "Farming and Taming Mobs," has a lot more information on breeding and taming mobs in Minecraft.

Start early, heading out with a stone sword at the ready, just in case. If you are low on wood, swing an axe at a few nearby trees.

Move carefully so you don’t lose your bearings. The sun rises in the east and sets in the west, and the clouds also travel from east to west, so you can always at least get a sense of direction. Following a compass cardinal point (north, south, east, or west) and using the sun and clouds as a reference can lead you away and reasonably accurately back home again, and keeping your map active in a Hotbar slot will also fill it in as you travel.

Food on the Run

If you are getting dangerously hungry, head to the nearest equivalent of a fast food outlet—a passive mob—sword at the ready. Your best bet is to look for cows and pigs because they each can drop up to three pieces of raw meat, with each restoring 3 hunger units and 1.8 in saturation. They’re an excellent target of opportunity. You can also eat raw chicken, although with a 30% chance of developing food poisoning, or you can try rotten meat harvested from zombies, which is guaranteed to give you a taste of the stomach aches. But after you have mined three pieces of iron and crafted a bucket, you can also cure any type of food poisoning by drinking milk obtained with that bucket from a cow. You can also eat any amount of poisoned meat, gaining the restorative benefits, and curing the whole lot with one serving of milk. So keep that rotten flesh the zombies drop around! And the bucket o’ milk.

That said, unless you are desperate, it is actually much better to take the time to cook all your meat first. In fact, the secondary processing of foods makes them all healthier, restoring more hunger and saturation points. If you are far from home, you could choose to always carry a furnace in your inventory, along with fuel. Place it, cook, and break it up to use again. Or you could, if you don’t mind seeming like a crazed pyromaniac, both kill and cook pigs, chickens, and cows in one blazing swoop by setting the ground beneath them on fire with a flint and steel (click on the ground next to the animal) or, a little more chaotically, by pouring lava from a bucket. Just take caution that you don’t do this anywhere it could pose a risk such as near that fantastic wood cabin you just spent the last three weeks building; there’s no undo in Minecraft.
NOTE

Fishing in the Sea of Plenty

Mobs such as chickens, cows, and pigs spawn quite rarely compared to hostile mobs, so consider them a nonrenewable resource if you kill them in the wild. You’re better off breeding them in a farm so they can be readily replaced. Fish, on the other hand, are unlimited in quantity and very plentiful, and fishing from a boat works very well. Your hunger bar won’t decrease, and you’ll be relatively safe from hostile mobs. Even better, you can eat on-the-go because you won’t ever get food poisoning from raw fish. Sushi anyone? See Chapter 7 for more information.

TIP

Let Them Eat Cake

What’s the quickest way to fill your hunger bar? Eat cake. Unlike another well-known game, Minecraft’s cake is not a lie. Cake has a quite complicated recipe, but each full cake provides up to 6 slices, each worth 1.5 hunger points, or 9 in total, and it’s less resource intensive than creating golden apples. Minecraft rewards calories, so eat as much as you like without penalty, quickly building back your full hunger bar. However, as in the real world, the nutrients are lacking, so cake doesn’t provide any saturation benefit. Make sure you eat some more nutritional foods such as protein as your hunger bar starts to top out to ensure you also get that extra boost. Personally speaking, if there was a choice between cake and pizza, I’m going for the former!

Finally, if you simply cannot find mobs, your hunger bar has dropped to starvation, and your health has plummeted to half a point, consider at least planting a wheat field and waiting it out in your shelter for a few days so that at least three blocks of wheat can grow and be baked into bread.

If all is lost, even then, consider one final alternative—a pretty neat if somewhat dramatic trick. Assuming you have reset your spawn point to a bed or are still near origin, head to your shelter, place everything you carry in a chest, and then head outside and either jump off a cliff, drown in a lake, or wait for a mob to kill you. You respawn back in your shelter with full health, a full hunger bar, and all your possessions waiting for you in the chest. The only downside is that you’ll lose some experience points in the process, which impacts enchanting, but I’m sure you can build those up again quickly enough. It’s a good last resort and will let you quickly head out again, fully equipped, to live another day.
Finding a Building Site

As you scout around, keep in mind that you are also looking for a new building site. This doesn’t have to be fancy or even particularly large. A 6×5 space manages just fine, and even 6×4 can squeeze in the basics. You can also level ground and break down a few trees to clear space. I did this in Figure 3.7.

FIGURE 3.7 A nice, flat, elevated building site created on a nearby hill after filling out the platform with dirt.

I usually prefer space that’s a little elevated because it provides a better view of the surroundings, but it’s perfectly possible to create a protected space just about anywhere. You may even decide to go a little hybrid, building a house that’s both tunneled into a hill and extending outside.

TIP

Light Those Caves

Check for any caves or tunnels close to your site’s location. If they aren’t too big, light them up with torches to prevent mobs spawning inside and wandering out during the day, or just block their entrances for now.

So what can we build on this site? Let me show you a basic structure. It takes 34 cobblestone blocks dug out of the first shelter and 12 wood blocks for the roof obtained by cutting down 3 trees. This is about as minimalistic as it gets (see Figure 3.8).
FIGURE 3.8 The layout for a small cobblestone cabin using a total of 46 blocks, roof not shown. The sharp-eyed will notice it can be reduced in width one space further, but for the sake of four blocks, that would feel just a little too claustrophobic.

You can build the roof from almost any handy material, including dirt, cobblestone, and wood. Avoid blocks that fall down, such as gravel and sand. A two-block-high wall keeps out all mobs except for spiders because they can climb walls. An overhang on the wall keeps spiders out because they can’t climb upside-down, but it’s easier to just add a roof, and this will protect you if there are any trees nearby the spiders can climb and use as an arachnid’s springboard to jump straight into your dwelling. (Yes, it has happened to me. Sent shivers up my spine.) Figure 3.9 shows the finished hut with a few torches on the outside to keep things well lit.

TIP

No Housing Codes in Minecraft

The roof in Figure 3.9 rests right on the lip of the inner wall. You can’t directly build a roof like this from scratch. First, place a block on top of the wall, and then attach the inner block for the roof. Remove the first block, and the inner block floats. Attach new blocks to that to build out the roof structure. It won’t pass a building inspection, but it certainly works in Minecraft.
FIGURE 3.9 The finished hut—basic but serviceable. And it’s spider proof. Although there is a large gap above the door, in Minecraft’s geometry the door fills the entire space. Spiders are two blocks wide, so they can’t fit through a one-block-wide gap. You could actually leave the door wide open, and spiders will just gather outside and make horrible noises, but don’t do that because it’s an invitation for other mobs to enter.

Building a wall even two blocks high can take a little bit of fancy footwork. Some basic techniques help:

- Place your walls one layer at a time. Put down the first layer, and then jump on top to place the second.

- If you fall off, place a temporary block on the inside of your structure against the wall, and use this to climb back up. You can remove it when you’re finished.

- Use pillar jumping if you need to go higher. While looking directly down, press \( \text{X} \) to jump and then use \( \text{L2} \) to place a block underneath you. You land on that block instead of the one below. Repeat as often as necessary. Dig the blocks out from directly underneath you to go back down.

- Click \( \text{L3} \) to activate Sneak mode as you work around the top of tall walls so you don’t fall off. You can even use this technique to place blocks on the side of your current layer that are normally beyond sight.

See Chapter 8 for more building techniques and ideas.
A Resourceful Guide to the Creative Mode Inventory

Minecraft resources fall into several primary categories. Some of them are a natural early focus as you improve your position from those gathered for first-night survival; others come into more focus as you get further through the game, gear up for your exploration of The Nether and The End regions, and start to become more creative with all that Minecraft has to offer. Here’s a quick summary of the categories. You can view all the possible tools and resources by opening a game in Creative mode and pressing , as shown in Figure 3.10. The categories that follow correspond to the tabs running across the upper and lower sections of the Creative mode inventory. Scroll the inventory with and for tabs, and then within the inventory using .

**Building Blocks**—Building blocks are used, as you might expect, for construction, including housing and almost anything else. Build a bridge for your redstone rail. Construct a dam. Elevate a farm above a level that won’t get trampled by mobs, or put up a fence. Build a skyscraper or reconstruct a monument. Minecraft provides a large number of primary blocks—cobblestone, gravel, wood, dirt, and so on—that can be harvested directly, but things definitely become more interesting when you start creating secondary types of blocks from primary materials. You can store many items more efficiently (for example, by converting nine gold ingots into a single gold block) and climb more efficiently by crafting stairs instead of jumping up and down blocks on well-travelled routes. These blocks are, without being too punny, the building blocks of creativity.
- **Decorations**—Decorations are something of a catchall category. Generally, they are things you can use to make your constructions more interesting. Some of those are just visual, such as the various mob heads, whereas others such as item frames and bookcases also serve functional purposes.

- **Redstone and Transportation**—Redstone is an almost magical resource. You can use it to build powered circuits, quite complex ones, and then activate pistons to automatically harvest a farm plot, set up traps, open and close doors, and a huge amount more. The limits are set only by your imagination. Redstone is also used to craft powered rail tracks and a range of other useful items such as compasses and clocks. This category also includes other items used for transportation such as the various types of minecarts and boats. See Chapter 9, “Redstone, Rails, and More,” for more information. There are enough options here to enable you to build everything from massive transportation systems to incredible rollercoasters.

- **Materials**—Materials is a catchall category, composed of items derived from another action. For example, killing a chicken can drop feathers, and you’ll need those for the fletching on arrows unless you gather arrows directly from slain skeletons.

- **Food**—Food contains the full range of edibles, including the enchanted form of the golden apple, the rarest edible in the game. Take a few of these with you the next time you think you’ll be in a tight spot, and you might just be able to make it through that moaning zombie horde.

- **Tools, Weapons, and Armor**—Tools can be wielded as weapons, but not very effectively. They are, however, great at digging, chopping, hoeing, and setting a Nether Portal on fire with the flint and steel. You’ll also find shears for stripping the wool from sheep, a fishing rod, and the full set of armor and tools.

- **Brewing**—The Brewing tab contains all possible potions and a number of the rarer ingredients required that don’t fit into other categories. Potions are incredibly handy, delivering such useful effects as protection from fire—something of an advantage when traveling to The Nether. You can learn more about brewing in Chapter 10. Use \(\text{Alt}+\text{B}\) in this tab to cycle through the potions of various strengths.

- **Miscellaneous**—Miscellaneous contains a range of useful and obscure items. You’ll find the buckets quite handy for setting up new water and lava sources, and you can use the eggs to spawn most of the mobs, populating a farm and more.

Use \(\text{Alt}\) to take individual items or \(\text{Shift}\) to take the full permissible stack. Get rid of a single stack from your Hotbar by picking it up, dragging it off the side of the inventory screen, and pressing \(\text{Alt}\) once more to drop it. You can also replace items by dropping the new one on top of the old.
The Bottom Line

Congratulations! You’ve now learned everything you need to know to understand how your character is doing, improve your tools for better longevity, hopefully not get lost on your travels, and create your first mob-proof outdoor shelter.

These are the keys to Minecraft. Just remember to head back to your chest often to store the valuables you’ve gathered or to build other chests further afield.

You might also want to consider building a pillar and platform on top of your new shelter. It can help you survey your terrain and act as an easy-to-see landmark when you’re out and about. Put some torches on top because mobs can spawn on any platform, no matter how small, and you don’t want to poke your head up through the platform only to discover a creeper on a short fuse. It will also help you spot home from a distance.

The next chapter is all downhill, but in a good way. You’ll be delving deep into your first mine.
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INDEX

Numerics

2x1 ladder descent, mining and, 71

A

adjusting gamma, 227
airlocks, crafting, 33
Allow friends of friends option (More Options window), 12
anchor blocks, 165
AND gates, 179-180
animals, 127
  breeding, 128-130
cats, 129
chickens, 129
  crafting arrows, 95
  fences, 128
cooking, 56
cows, 129
establishing farms, 127-129
fences, 128
fishing, 133
food poisoning, 56
herding, 129
hostile mobs and safety, 130
leading, 129
mooshrooms, 129

ocelots, 129
pigs, 129, 133
raw, eating, 56
resources, animals as, 54-57
riding, 133
sheep, 129-130
squid, 134
taming, 129
wolves, 129

anvils
  combining two items with, 200
crafting, 198
enchantments, 200
placement of, 198
renaming items, 200
repairing items, 200
Aqua Affinity enchantment, 197
architectural plans, finding, 140
armor, 93
crafting
  recipes, 99
  requirements, 97
critical hits, 93
damage absorption, 98
enchantments, 197
The End survival checklist, 233
leather, dyeing, 100
The Nether survival checklist, 224
armor bar (HUD), 44
Armor slots (inventory), 27
arrows and bow
crafting, 95-96
The End survival checklist, 233
fighting, 96-97
The Nether survival checklist, 224
skeletons, 86, 95
arrow slits, building, 157
attacking, fighting with swords, 52
automated farms, 114-115, 118
crop selection, 117
harvesting, 116
piston harvesters, 118-119
sticky piston harvesters, 120
sugar cane, 124
water harvesters, 121-123
automatic doors, building, 170-173
avoiding mobs, 52-53
awkward potions, 203-204
axes, crafting, 30

taking with you, 41
villages and, 209
wool
crafting, 39
spider string instead of, 39
beds, building, 142
bedside tables, building, 142
Beijing, China, 138
biomes
Far Lands or Bust, 11
trees
first-night survival, 25
lumberjacking, 25-26
Blast Protection enchantment, 197
blaze rods
brewing potions, 201
The Nether, 230
blazes, The Nether, 231
blaze spawners, 230
blocking attacks, 94
blocking off areas (mining), 70
blocks
anchor blocks, 165
cobblestone, The Nether survival checklist, 224
floating blocks, 140
netherbrick, 228
nether quartz, 228
The Nether, building barricades, 229
note blocks as output devices, 170
obsidian
The End survival checklist, 233
Nether Portals, building, 225
The Nether survival checklist, 225

B

Bane of Arthropods enchantment, 196
barricades, building, 229
bases
mining bases, setting up, 78
underwater bases, mob attacks, 45
basins, 212
BBQ, building, 145
beds
crafting, 38-39
The End, 232-233
The Nether, 232
powered blocks, 164
  buttons, 165
  levers, 165
  two block rule, 166
scale of, 138
signs, placement of, 141
snow blocks, The Nether survival checklist, 224
soft blocks, building underwater, 148, 151
wood blocks, The Nether survival checklist, 225
bobbers (fishing), 133
bones
  as resources, 56
  farming, benefits in, 112
books
  crafting, 192
  enchantment tables, 192
  storing enchantments, 194
bookshelves, casting enchantments, 194
bookshelves, building, 145
bottles, crafting, 203
bow and arrows
  crafting, 95-96
  The End survival checklist, 233
  fighting, 96-97
  The Nether survival checklist, 224
bowls, crafting, 126
branch mines, 76-77
bread, crafting, 57
breaking your fall while mining, 72-73
breeding animals, 128-130
brewing, 200
  blaze rods, 201
  bottles, crafting, 203
  brewing stands, building, 203
  Creative mode inventory, 62
  nether wart, 200-203
  soul sand, 200-202
  testing potions, 201
  brightness, adjusting, 227
  buckets, mining and, 66
  building, 137
  arrow slits, 157
  automatic doors, 170-173
  barricades, The Nether, 229
  BBQ, 145
  beds, 142
  bedside tables, 142
  bookshelves, 145, 194
  brewing stands, 203
  chairs, 141
  clocks (wall), 143
  dining tables, 141
  enchantment tables, 188
    books, 192
    casting enchantments, 192-193
    obsidian, 189-191
  examples of, 137-138
  fantasy trees, growing, 143
  fireplaces, 145
  floors (raised/lowered), 145
  fountains, 144
  frames (item), 143
  hedges, growing, 143
  indoor plants, growing, 142
  interior design
    BBQ, 145
    beds, 142
    bedside tables, 142
    bookshelves, 145
    chairs, 141
clocks (wall), 143
dining tables, 141
fireplaces, 145
floors (raised/lowered), 145
frames (item), 143
indoor plants, 142
item frames, 143
maps (wall), 143
netting, 145
paintings, 144
signs, 141
wall clocks, 143
wall maps, 143
item frames, 143
location, determining, 139, 149
maps (wall), 143
Nether Portals, 225
netting, 145
perimeters, 153
arrow slits, 157
ditches, 153-154
lighting, 155
mobs, 155-157
perimeters, 153-157
pits, 155-157
pressure plates, 156
towers, 155
walls, 157
signs, placement of, 141
sliding doors, 174-176
tables
bedside tables, 142
dining tables, 141
tennis courts, 145
tool enchantments, 197-198
tracks
halfway stations, 185
mobs, protecting tracks from, 186
powered rails, 184
zig zags, 184
trees, growing, 143
underwater, 147, 151-152
Creative mode, 147
doors, 150
enchantments, 153
flooding, 151
island spawn points, 149
ladders, 150
lighting, 148-150
location, 149
oxygen, 150
required equipment, 148
security, 153
signs, 150
soft blocks, 148, 151

Survival mode, 147

villages, building next to, 139
wall clocks, 143
wall maps, 143
walls, 157
water, building on/under, 139-140

buildings
building blocks, 61
decoration blocks, 62
housing codes, 59
huts, building, 58-60
lighting, 58
overhangs, spiders and, 59
redstone, 62
sites, finding, 58
walls, building, 60
built-in tutorial, 8
buttons, 162. See also pressure plates
  automatic doors, 170
  powered blocks, 165

C

cake, 57
carts, 181
destroying/reusing, 182
powered minecarts, 181-182
rails, 159
detector rails, 162, 184
normal rails, 183
powered rails, 183-184
storage minecarts, 182
tracks, building
  halfway stations, 185
  mobs, protecting tracks from, 186
powered rails, 184
zig zags, 184
trains, minecarts as, 182
underground rails, 183
cats (ocelots), 129
caverns, 212
caves
crafting shelter from, 32
doors, importance of, 83
lighting, 58
mining, creating caves, 66
mining existing caves, 65
cave spiders, fighting, 86-87
chairs, building, 141
charcoal
crafting, 34
furnaces, fueling, 36
cheats, seeding, 19
cheats, 50
crafting, 50
Ender chests, 222, 225
minecarts with chests (storage minecarts), 182
mining and, 78
The Nether survival checklist, 225
opening, 50
sizes of, 50
chickens, 129
arrows, crafting, 95
fences, 128
children in villages, 208-210
China, city of Beijing, 138
chopping trees. See lumberjacking, 25
chunks (mining), 79
circuits

AND gates, 179-180
NOR gates, 179
NOT gates (inverters), 177
OR gates, 178
repeater loops, 180
cliffs

crafting shelter from, 32
The Nether, 228
clocks, crafting, 143, 218-219
closing doors, 33
clothing, 130
clean coal
charcoal, crafting, 34
furnaces, fueling, 36
cobblestone, 55
furnaces, crafting, 35-36
huts, building, 59
The Nether survival checklist, 224
powered blocks, 165
cobwebs, netting, 145
cocoa beans, 104-105
cocoa pods, finding, 107
color dye recipes, 131-132
combat
armor

crafting, 97-99
critical hits, 93
damage absorption, 98
bow and arrows, 97
crafting, 95-96	
target practice, 96
creepers, 88-89, 101
critical hits, 93
enchantments, 196
Ender Dragon, 237, 240
Endermen, 90
hostile mobs, 82
iron golems, 92-93
skeletons, 85-87
slimes, 89
snow golems, 91-92
spiders, 84-85
cave spiders, 86-87
spider jockeys, 87
sprinting and, 94
swords

blocking attacks, 94
crafting, 94
damage, 94
fighting with, 52
weapons, 93
bows and arrows, 95-97
critical hits, 93
swords, 94
zombies, 82-83, 90-91
combining enchantments with an anvil, 200
compasses, crafting, 46, 217
construction, 137
arrow slits, 157
automatic doors, 170-173
barricades, The Nether, 229
BBQ, 145
beds, 142
bedside tables, 142
bookshelves, 145, 194
brewing stands, 203
chairs, 141
clocks (wall), 143
dining tables, 141
enchantment tables, 188

books, 192

casting enchantments, 192-193

obsidian, 189-191

elements of, 137-138

fantasy trees, growing, 143

fireplaces, 145

floors (raised/lowered), 145

fountains, 144

frames (item), 143

hedges growing, 143

huts, 58-60

indoor plants, growing, 142

interior design

BBQ, 145

beds, 142

bedside tables, 142

bookshelves, 145

chairs, 141

clocks (wall), 143

dining tables, 141

fireplaces, 145

floors (raised/lowered), 145

frames (item), 143

indoor plants, 142

item frames, 143

maps (wall), 143

netting, 145

paintings, 144

signs, 141

wall clocks, 143

wall maps, 143

item frames, 143

lighting, 58

location, determining, 139, 149

maps (wall), 143

Nether Portals, 225

netting, 145

overhangs, spiders and, 59

perimeters, 153

arrow slits, 157

ditches, 153-154

lighting, 155

mobs, 155-157

towers, 155

walls, 157

pits

mobs, 155-157

pressure plates, 156

plans, finding, 140

planter boxes, 143

ponds, 144

pools, 144

resource packs, 138

scale of, 138

security

arrow slits, 157

ditches, 153-154

lighting, 155

mobs, 155-157

perimeters, 153-157

pits, 155-157

pressure plates, 156

towers, 155

walls, 157

signs, placement of, 141

sites, finding, 58

sliding doors, 174-176

tennis courts, 145
tracks
  halfway stations, 185
  mobs, protecting tracks from, 186
  powered rails, 184
  zig zags, 184
trees, growing, 143
underwater, 147, 151-152
  Creative mode, 147
doors, 150
  enchantments, 153
flooding, 151
island spawn points, 149
ladders, 150
lighting, 148-150
location, 149
oxygen, 150
required equipment, 148
security, 153
signs, 150
  soft blocks, 148, 151
Survival mode, 147
villages, building next to, 139
wall clocks, 143
wall maps, 143
walls, 157
  water, building on/under, 139-140
controlling multiplayer games, 15-17
controls
  list of controls, 20
cooking, 56
cows, 129
crafting
  airlocks, 33
  anvils, 198
armor
  recipes, 99
  requirements, 97
  beds, 38-39
  books, 192
  bottles, 203
  bowls, 126
  bows and arrows, 95-96
  bread, 57
  charcoal, 34
  chests, 50
  clocks, 218-219
  compasses, 46, 217
  crafting table, 33
  doors, 33
  emergency shelters, 35
  furnaces, 35-36
  heat sources, 34-35
  light sources, 34-37
  maps, 217-218
  pillar jumping, 35
  shelter, 31-33
    doors, 33-34
    heat sources, 34-35
    light sources, 34-37
  shelters, emergency shelters, 35
  swords, 94
tools
  axes, 30
  durability, 49
  handles, 30
  pickaxes, 30
  torches, 36-37
crop farming

weapons
  bows and arrows, 95-96
  swords, 94
wool, 39
crafting table
crafting, 33
first-night survival, 33
Create New World screen, selecting game mode, 10
Creative mode, 14
inventory, 61
  brewing, 62
  building blocks, 61
  decoration blocks, 62
  foodstuffs, 62
  materials, 62
  miscellaneous, 62
  redstone, 62
  tools, 62
underwater, building, 147
creepers, 51
defending against, 101
fighting, 88-89
gunpowder and, 89
swimming and, 89
critical hits (combat), 93
crop farming, 103
automated farms, 114-115, 118
  crop selection, 117
  harvesting, 116
  piston harvesters, 118-119
  sticky piston harvesters, 120
  sugar cane, 124
  water harvesters, 121-123
bones and, 112
choosing crops, 103-106
cocoa beans, 104-105
establishing farms, 108
  block to crop ratios, 109
  bone meal, 112
difficult terrain, 107-108
fences, 111, 114
growth cycles, 111
harvesting, 114
lighting, 111
location, 107-108
planting, 110
raised beds, 113-114
saving crops, 113
water, 109, 113
fences, 104, 111, 114
growth cycles, 111
harvesting, 112-116
lighting and, 104, 111
Minecraft updates and, 108
piston farms, 114-115, 118
  crop selection, 117
  harvesting, 116
  piston harvesters, 118-119
  sticky piston harvesters, 120
  sugar cane, 124
  water harvesters, 121-123
pumpkins, 105
raised beds, 104, 113-114
saving crops, 113
seeds, 103, 110
self-sufficiency, 104
sneaking and, 113
soil, 104
sugar cane, 104-106, 124
tending farms, 104
underground farms, 104, 125
wheat, 103, 106
  growth cycles, 111
  harvesting, 112-114
crosshairs (bow and arrows), targeting with, 96
current, vertical current, 176-177
custom world, creating, 9

damage
  armor, 98
  swords, 94
dandelions, dyeing and, 131
Dante
  The End, Dante’s influence on, 232
  The Nether, Dante’s influence on, 232
decoration blocks, 62
defense
  barricades, building, 229
caves, doors, 83
creeper attacks, 101
doors, importance of, 83
  Ender Dragon, defeating, 237, 240
  spiders, walls, 84
  tunnels, doors, 83
defensive enchantments, 197
defensive mobs
  iron golems, fighting, 92-93
  snow golems, fighting, 91-92
desert temples, 213-214
destroying/reusing minecarts, 182
detection systems
  detector rails, 162, 184
  tripwires, 162
detector rails, 162, 184
diamond (material type), 48
difficulty levels, 11
digging permanent watering holes, 111
dining tables, building, 141
dispensers as output devices, 169
ditches, building, 153-154
doors
  airlocks, crafting, 33
  as output devices, 169
  automatic doors, building, 170-173
caves and tunnels, 83
crafting, 33
  installing, 34
  iron doors, 33, 225
  opening/closing, 33
  sliding doors, building, 174-176
  trapdoors as output devices, 169
underwater, building, 150
dungeons, 215
durability
  defining, 47-48
  diamond, 48
gold, 47
ing, 48
stone, 48
tools
  crafting, 49
  improving, 47-48
wood, 47
dyeing
  color, choosing, 131
  color recipes, 131-132
dandelions and, 131
Lapis Lazuli ore and, 131
leather armor, 100
squid ink, 134
wool, 130

E

earning XP, 195-196
Easy option (Survival mode), 15
Efficiency enchantment, 198
Elysium world, locating crop seeds, 106-108
emeralds, 211
emergency shelters, 35
enchancements, 187
anvils, 198-200
armor, 197
benefits of, 187
books, 192-194
bookshelves, casting enchantments, 194
casting, 192-194
enchantment tables, 188
books, 192
casting enchantments, 192-193
obsidian, 189-191
methods of gaining, 188
respiration, building underwater, 153
storing with books, 194
tools, 197-198
underwater, building, 153
water affinity, building underwater, 153
weapons, 196
Ender chests, 222, 225
Ender crystals, Ender Dragon and, 237-239
Ender Dragon, 223, 236
defeating, 237, 240
egg, collecting, 241
Endermen, 237, 240
ender pearls, 90
Eyes of Ender, 90
fighting, 90
ender pearls, Endermen and, 90
The End, 24, 221
Dante’s influence on, 232
Ender chests, 222
Ender crystals, 237-239
Ender Dragon, 223, 236
defeating, 237, 240
egg, collecting, 241
ender pearls, 90
Endermen, 90, 237, 240
End Poem, 241
End Portals, 236
Eyes of Ender, 233-236
navigating, 223
silverfish spawners, 235
sleeping in, 232-233
strongholds, finding, 236
survival checklist, 233
enemies
avoiding, 52-53
creepers, 51
defending against, 101
fighting, 88-89
gunpowder and, 89
swimming and, 89
Endermen
der pearls, 90
Eyes of Ender, 90
fighting, 90
fighting, 52
iron golems, fighting, 92-93
pursuit mode, 52
skeletons, 51
  arrows and, 86, 95
  fighting, 85-86
  spider jockeys, 87
slimes, 52, 89
snow golems, fighting, 91-92
spiders, 51
  cave spiders, 86-87
  defending against, 84
  fighting, 84-85
  overhangs and, 59
  spider jockeys, 87
string, 84
  uses for, 84
  walls as defense, 84
zombies, 51
  crafting arrows, 95
  fighting, 82-83
  rotten meat, 83
  zombie pigmen, 90-91
enhancing potions, 205-206
equipment
  The End survival checklist, 233
  The Nether survival checklist, 224-225
experience bar (HUD), 44-45
experience points (XP)
  earning, 195-196
  enchantments, 187, 192
  managing, 195-196
Eyes of Ender, 90, 233-236

F

falling while mining, 69, 72-73
fantasy trees, growing, 143

Far Lands or Bust, 11
farming, 103
animals, 127
  breeding, 128-130
  cats, 129
  chickens, 128-129
  cows, 129
  establishing farms, 127-129
  fences, 128
  fishing, 133
  herding, 129
  hostile mobs and safety, 130
  leading, 129
  mooshrooms, 129
  ocelots, 129
  pigs, 129, 133
  riding, 133
  sheep, 129-130
  taming, 129
  wolves, 129
automated farms, 114-115, 118
  crop selection, 117
  harvesting, 116
  piston harvesters, 118-119
  sticky piston harvesters, 120
  sugar cane, 124
  water harvesters, 121-123
bones and, 112
choosing crops, 103-106
cocoa beans, 104-105
establishing farms, 108
animals, 127-129
  block to crop ratios, 109
  bone meal, 112
  difficult terrain, 107-108
  fences, 111, 114
growth cycles, 111
harvesting, 114
lighting, 111
location, 107-108
planting, 110
raised beds, 113-114
saving crops, 113
water, 109, 113
fences, 104, 111, 114
growth cycles, 111
harvesting, 112-116
lighting and, 104, 111
Minecraft updates and, 108
piston farms, 114-115, 118
crop selection, 117
harvesting, 116
piston harvesters, 118-119
sticky piston harvesters, 120
sugar cane, 124
water harvesters, 121-123
pumpkins, 105
raised beds, 104, 113-114
saving crops, 113
seeds, 103, 110
self-sufficiency, 104
sneaking and, 113
soil, 104
sugar cane, 104-106, 124
tending farms, 104
underground farms, 104, 125
wheat, 103, 106
growth farming, 111
harvesting, 112-114
Feather Falling enchantment, 197

fences
animals, 128
farming, 104, 111, 114
gates as output devices, 169
fermented spider eye, potions, 205
fighting
armor, 93
crafting, 97-99
critical hits, 93
damage absorption, 98
blocking attacks, 94
bow and arrows, 97
crafting, 95-96
target practice, 96
combat enchantments, 196
creepers, 88-89
critical hits, 93
defensive enchantments, 197
Endermen, 90
hostile mobs, 82
iron golems, 92-93
skeletons, 85-87
slimes, 89
snow golems, 91-92
spiders, 84-85
cave spiders, 86-87
spider jockeys, 87
sprinting and, 94
swords, 52
blocking attacks, 94
crafting, 94
damage, 94
fighting

- weapons, 93
  - bow and arrows, 95-97
  - critical hits, 93
  - swords, 94
- zombies, 82-83, 90-91

finding
- building sites, 58
- crop seeds in Elysium, 106-108
- End strongholds, The, 236
- Nether strongholds, The, 236
- Nether fortresses, 228-229

Fire
- Fire Aspect enchantment, 196
- fireplaces, building, 145
- Fire Protection enchantment, 197
- Fire Resistance potion, 204
- Fire Spreads option (More Options window), 12

first night, surviving
- crafting
  - axes, 30
  - beds, 38-39
  - crafting table, 33
- furnaces, 35-36
- heat sources, 34-35
- light sources, 34-37
- pickaxes, 30
- shelter, 31-35
- tool handles, 30
- torches, 36-37
- first-day tasks, 23-24
- inventory, checking, 26-28
- perimeter structures as protection, 33
- trees, 25-26
- wood, gathering, 25

fishing, 133
- Flame enchantment, 196
- flash drives, storing saved games, 7

- flint
  - arrows, crafting, 96
  - mining, quick mining tips, 96
- Nether Portals, 226
- The Nether survival checklist, 225

floating blocks, 140
flooding, building underwater, 151
floors (raised/lowered), building, 145

food
- animals, 54-57
- bowls, crafting, 126
- bread, crafting, 57
- brewing, Creative mode inventory, 62
- cake, 57
- cooking, 56
- The End survival checklist, 233
- foodstuffs category (Creative mode inventory), 62
- harvesting, 55-57
- health and, 54
- hunger
  - hunger bar (HUD), 45, 53
  - saturation, 53
- meat, rotten meat and zombies, 83
- mining and, 66
- mushroom stew, creating, 126
- The Nether survival checklist, 225
- poisoning, 56
- raw, eating, 56
- vegetables, 55

fortresses, Nether fortresses
- finding, 228-229
- survival tips, 229-230
- Fortune enchantment, 198
- fountains, building, 144
- frames (item), building, 143
friends, inviting to online games, 18
fueling furnaces, 36
furnaces
  crafting, 35-36
  fueling, 36
minecarts with furnaces (powered minecarts), 181-182

game modes
  Creative mode, 14
  Survival mode, 13
    Easy option, 15
    Hard option, 15
    Normal option, 15
    Peaceful option, 14
Game Mode selector (Create New World screen), 10
Game of Thrones, 138
games, pausing, 24
gamma, adjusting, 227
gates
  AND gates, 179-180
    as output devices, 169
  NOR gates, 179
  NOT gates (inverters), 177
  OR gates, 178
generations, changing, 9-10
ghasts, The Nether, 228-231
glowstone
  The Nether, 228
    underwater, building, 148-150
glowstones, 205
gold (material type), 47
golems
  iron golems, fighting, 92-93
  snow golems, fighting, 91-92
  villages and, 209
gravel
  arrows, crafting, 96
  mining, quick mining tips, 96
  The Nether survival checklist, 224
griefing, 12
growing
  hedges, 143
  indoor plants, 142
  trees (fantasy), 143
  growth cycles (farming), 111
gunpowder
  creepers and, 89
  potions, 205

halfway stations, building tracks, 185
handles (tool), crafting, 30
Hard option (Survival mode), 15
Harming potions, 206
harvesting, 55, 112-114
  piston farms, 116
  wheat, 57
Healing potion, 204
health
  food and, 54
  hunger and, 54
health bar (HUD), 44
heat sources, crafting, 34-35
hedges, growing, 143
herding animals, 129
hills, crafting shelter from, 32
hostile mobs
creepers
  defending against, 101
  fighting, 88-89
  gunpowder and, 89
  swimming and, 89
Endermen, 90
farming and animals, 130
fighting, 82
skeletons
  arrows and, 86, 95
  fighting, 85-86
  spider jockeys, 87
slimes, fighting, 89
spiders
  cave spiders, 86-87
  defending against, 84
  fighting, 84-85
  spider jockeys, 87
  string, 84
  uses for, 84
  walls as defense, 84
zombies
  crafting arrows, 95
  fighting, 82-83
  rotten meat, 83
  zombie pigmen, 90-91
hosting multiplayer games, 15-17
Host Privileges option (More Options window), 12
houses
  building blocks, 61
  decoration blocks, 62
  housing codes, 59
  huts, building, 58-60
  overhangs, spiders and, 59
  redstone, 62
  HUD (Head Up Display), 43
  armor bar, 44
  experience bar, 44-45
  health bar, 44
  hunger bar, 45, 53
  inventory quick access, 46
  oxygen bar, 45
hunger
  dying from, 57
  food
    bread, 57
    cake, 57
    cooking, 56
  food poisoning, 56
  health and, 54
  hunger bar (HUD), 45, 53
  Normal difficulty and, 54
  raw meat, eating, 56
  saturation, 53
  sprinting and, 53
huts
  building, 58-60
  overhang, spiders and, 59
hydration
  farming, 109, 113
  permanent watering holes, digging, 111
  water harvesters, 121-123

improving tools, 70
Indiana Jones, 214
indoor plants, growing, 142
Infinity enchantment, 196
ink, squid ink, 134
installing doors, 34
interior design
BBQ, 145
beds, 142
bedside tables, 142
bookshelves, 145
chairs, 141
clocks (wall), 143
dining tables, 141
fireplaces, 145
floors (raised/lowered), 145
frames (item), 143
indoor plants, 142
item frames, 143
maps (wall), 143
netting, 145
paintings, 144
signs, placement of, 141
wall clocks, 143
wall maps, 143
inventory, 26
Armor slots, 27
Creative mode, 61
brewing, 62
building blocks, 61
decoration blocks, 62
foodstuffs, 62
materials, 62
miscellaneous, 62
redstone, 62
tools, 62
first-night survival, 26-28
inventory quick access (HUD), 46
Inventory slots, 27
opening, 27-29

quick access grid, 27
stacking items, 28
storage area, 27
inverters (NOT gates), 177
Invisibility potion, 204
inviting friends to online games, 18
iron, 48, 198, 225
iron bars, The Nether survival checklist, 225
iron doors, 33
iron golems
fighting, 92-93
villages and, 209
islands, building underwater, 149
item frames, building, 143

J-K

jack-o’-lanterns
as crop, 105
as light source, 113, 148, 150
The Nether survival checklist, 225
The Nether, 228
jockeys (spider), fighting, 87
jungle temples, 214

Knockback enchantments, 196

L

ladders
2x1 ladder descent, mining and, 71
pausing on, 71
underwater, building, 150
lamps
bedside tables and, 142
redstone lamps, 168
Lapis Lazuli, dyeing and, 131
lava, fueling furnaces, 36
lava lakes
  mining and, 69, 76
  The Nether, 228
lava pools
  obsidian, mining, 189-191
leading animals, 129
leather armor, dyeing, 100
levers, 162
  powered blocks, 165
lighting
  bedside tables and, 142
caves and tunnels, 58
farming and, 104, 111
mines, 70
The Nether survival checklist, 225
The Nether, 228-229
perimeters, 155
torches, mining, 66
underwater, building, 148-150
light sources, crafting, 34-37
loading saved games on other consoles, 7
locating
  portal room, 235
  strongholds, 234
loops, repeater loops, 180
Looting enchantment, 196
lowered floors, building, 145

M

magma cubes, The Nether, 231
managing XP, 195-196
maps, crafting, 217-218
maps (wall), building, 143
materials category (Creative mode inventory), 62
material strength. See durability
meat, rotten meat, 83
melon seeds, finding, 108
Middle Earth, 138
minecarts, 181
  destroying/reusing, 182
  powered minecarts, 181-182
rails, 159
  detector rails, 162, 184
  normal rails, 183
  powered rails, 169, 183-184
  pressure plates, 162
storage minecarts, 182
tracks, building
  halfway stations, 185
  mobs, protecting tracks from, 186
  powered rails, 184
  zig zags, 184
trains, minecarts as, 182
underground rails, 183
Minecraft
controls
  list of controls, 20
new games
  choosing biomes, 11
  selecting game mode, 10
updates, farming and, 108
mining
  2x1 ladder descent, 71
abandoned mineshafts, 216
bases, setting up, 78
blocking off areas, 70
branch mines, 76-77
breaking your fall, 72-73
buckets, 66
cave spiders, fighting, 86-87
caves
  creating caves, 66
  existing caves, 65
chests, placing in mines, 78
chunks, 79
cobblestone, 55
do’s and don’ts, 69-70
down, digging straight down, 69
down, digging straight up, 69
falling, 72-73
falling and, 69
farming underground, 104, 125
flint
  quick mining tips, 96
food, 66
gravel
  quick mining tips, 96
ladders
  2x1 ladder descent, 71
  pausing, 71
lava lakes, 69, 76
lighting, 70
mobs and, 78
netherrack, 227
obsidian, 67, 189-191
ore layers, 67-69
pickaxes, 66
quick access bar, keeping blocks in, 69
safety and, 78
sleep, 78
sneaking around hazards, 78
staging points, 78
staircases
  spiral staircases, 74-75
  straight staircases, 73-74
strategies for starting, 65-66
tools
  improving, 70
  required equipment list, 66
torches, 66
unlit areas, 70
way out, knowing, 69
wood blocks and, 66
miscellaneous category (Creative mode inventory), 62
mobs
avoiding, 52-53
character vulnerability and inventory checks, 29
creeper, 51
  defending against, 101
  fighting, 88-89
  gunpowder and, 89
  swimming and, 89
defining, 15
ditches, crossing, 153
employing, 155-157
Endermen
  ender pearls, 90
  Eyes of Ender, 90
  fighting, 90
fighting, 52, 82
hostile mobs, farming and animals, 130
inventory checks and character vulnerability, 29
iron golems, fighting, 92-93
mining, 78
The Nether, 226-231
passive mobs  
  animals as, 54-57  
squid, 134  
pursuit mode, 52  
security  
pits, 155-157  
water, 154  
skeletons, 51  
arrows and, 86, 95  
fighting, 85-86  
spider jockeys, 87  
sleep, 78  
slimes, 52, 89  
snow golems, fighting, 91-92  
spawners, disabling, 212  
spiders, 51  
cave spiders, 86-87  
defending against, 84  
fighting, 84-85  
spider jockeys, 87  
string, 84  
uses for, 84  
walls as defense, 84  
tracks, protecting from attack, 186  
types of, 15  
underwater bases, 45  
water, 154  
zombies, 51  
arrows, crafting, 95  
fighting, 82-83  
rotten meat, 83  
zombie pigmen, 90-91  
monsters  
avoiding, 52-53  
creepers, 51  
fighting, 52  
pursuit mode, 52  
skeletons, 51  
slimes, 52  
spiders, 51, 59  
zombies, 51  
mooshrooms, 129  
More Options button, 11-13  
multiplayer games  
hosting, 15-17  
inviting friends, 18  
split screen orientation, changing, 16  
teleporting, 17  
mushrooms, The Nether, 228  
mushroom stew, creating, 126  
music, note blocks, 170  

N  
navigating  
  compasses, crafting, 46  
The End, 223  
The Nether, 223  
negative potions, 205-206  
negative structures, 212  
netherbrick, 228  
nether quartz, 228  
Netherrack, 145, 227  
The Nether, 24, 221  
barricades, building, 229  
blaze rods, 230  
blazes, 231  
blaze spawners, 230  
cliffs, 228  
Dante’s influence on, 232  
Ender chests, 222
fortresses
  finding, 228-229
  survival tips, 229-230
ghasts, 228-231
glowstone, 228
jack-o’-lanterns, 228
lava lakes, 228
lighting, 228-229
magma cubes, 231
mobs, 226-231
mushrooms, 228
navigating, 223
netherbrick, 228
Nether Portal, 225-226
nether quartz, 228
nether wart, 229
Overworld size comparison to, 232
sleeping in, 232
soul sand, 228
stairs, 227
survival checklist, 224-225
torches, 228-229
tunnels, 227
water, 224
nether wart
  brewing potions, 200-203
netting, 145
new games
  biomes, Far Lands or Bust, 11
  selecting game mode, 10
Night Vision potion, 204
NOR gates, 179
Normal difficulty, hunger and, 54
Normal option (Survival mode), 15
note blocks as output devices, 170
NOT gates (inverters), 177

O

obsidian
  enchantment tables, 189-191
  The End survival checklist, 233
  mining, 67, 189-191
  Nether Portals, building, 225
  The Nether survival checklist, 225
ocelots (cats), 129
Online Game option (More Options window), 12
online games, inviting friends, 18
online resources, Far Lands or Bust, 11
opening
  doors, 33
  inventory, 27-29
  ore layers, 67-69
OR gates, 178
output devices, 168-170
dispensers, 169
doors, 169
fence gates, 169
note blocks, 170
pistons, 169, 175
powered rails, 169
redstone lamps, 168
redstone torches, vertical current, 176-177
TNT, 170
trapdoors, 169
overhangs, spiders and, 59
Overworlds

portal room, locating, 235
strongholds, locating, 234
oxygen bar (HUD), 45
oxygen, building underwater, 150

P

paintings, interior design and, 144
passive mobs
  animals as, 54-57
  squid, 134
pausing games, 24, 71
Peaceful option (Survival mode), 14
pearls (ender), Endermen and, 90
perimeters, building, 33, 153
  arrow slits, 157
ditches, 153-154
fences, 104, 111, 114, 128
lighting, 155
mobs, 155-157
towers, 155
walls, 157
pickaxes
  crafting, 30
  mining and, 66
  The Nether survival checklist, 224
picking up items, 28
pigs, 129, 133
pillar jumping, 35, 60
piston farms, 114-115, 118
  crop selection, 117
  harvesting, 116
  piston harvesters, 118-119
  sticky piston harvesters, 120
  sugar cane, 124
  water harvesters, 121-123
pistons
  as output devices, 169
  sliding doors, 175
pits, building
  mobs, 155-157
  pressure plates, 156
placing items, 28
planter boxes, building, 143
plants, growing
  establishing farms, 110
  fantasy trees, 143
  hedges, 143
  indoor plants, 142
Players vs. Player option (More Options window), 12
Poison potions, 206
poisons, rotting meat, 83
ponds, 144
pools, 144
portal room, locating, 235
portals
  End Portals, 236
  Nether Portal, 225-226
positive effect potions, 204-206
positive potions, 204
potions
  awkward potion, 203-204
  building brewing stands, 203
  nether wart, 200-203
  soul sand, 200-202
  testing potions, 201
The End survival checklist, 233
enhancing, 205-206
fermented spider eye, 205
glowstone dust, 205
gunpowder, 205
negative potions, 205-206
positive potions, 204-206
redstone dust, 205
skeletons, 206
splash potions, 205
zombies, 206
powered blocks, 164
buttons, 165
levers, 165
two block rule, 166
powered minecarts, 181-182
powered rails, 169, 183-184
Power enchantment, 196
power sources, 160-161
powered blocks, 164
buttons, 165
levers, 165
two block rule, 166
redstone, 161
powered blocks, 165
powered rails, 183-184
redstone wire, properties of, 163-164
repeaters, 166
repeaters, 166
pressure plates, 162. See also buttons
automatic doors, 173
detector rails, 184
minecart rails, 162
pits, 156
Projectile Protection enchantment, 197
protection enchantments, 197
pumpkins, 105-106
Punch enchantment, 196
pursuit mode, mobs and, 52
Q
quick access bar, mining, 69
quick access grid (inventory), 27
quick access slots, The Nether survival checklist, 225
R
Raiders of the Lost Ark, 214
rails, 159
detector rails, 162, 184
minecarts, 181
destroying/reusing, 182
powered minecarts, 181-182
storage minecarts, 182
trains, 182
normal rails, 183
powered rails, 169, 183-184
pressure plates, 162
tracks, building
halfway stations, 185
mobs, protecting tracks from, 186
powered rails, 184
zig zags, 184
trains, 182
underground rails, 183
rain, fishing in, 133
raised beds (farming), 104, 113-114
raised floors, building, 145
ravines, 212
recipes
   armor, crafting, 99
   for creating dyes, 131-132
redstone, 62, 159-160, 168
automated farms, building, 117
piston farms, creating, 117
powered rails, 183-184
redstone torches, 161, 165
redstone wire, properties of, 163-164
repeaters, 166, 172
sticky piston harvesters, building, 120
vertical current, 176-177
Regeneration potion, 204
renaming items, anvils and, 200
repeater loops, 180
repeaters, 166, 172
Reset Nether option (More Options window), 13
resource packs, 138
resources
   animals, 54-57
   bones as, 56
   cobblestone, 55
gathering, 56
harvesting, 55
skeletons as, 56
vegetables, 55
resources (online), Far Lands or Bust, 11
respawning, 15, 57
Respiration enchantment, 153, 197
reusing destroyed minecarts, 182
rotten meat, zombies and, 83
running, 53

S
   safety, mining and, 78
   saturation, hunger and, 53
   saving crops, 113
   security
      arrow slits, building, 157
ditches, building, 153-154
mobs, 154
perimeters, building, 153
      arrow slits, 157
ditches, 153-154
lighting, 155
mobs, 155-157
towers, 155
walls, 157
pits, building
mobs, 155-157
pressure plates, 156
pressure plates, pits, 156
towers, building, 155
underwater, building, 153
walls, building, 157
water, 154
seeding, 19
seeds, 103
   changing generations, 9-10
   planting, 110
   semi-automated farms, 117
   settings, 11-13
   sharing seeds, 19
   Sharpness enchantment, 196
sheep, 39, 129-130
shelter
   building blocks, 61
caves, 32
cliffs, 32

crafting, 31-33

decoration blocks, 62
doors
  crafting, 33
  installing, 34
emergency shelters, crafting, 35
heat sources, crafting, 34-35
hills, 32
housing codes, 59
huts, building, 58-60
light sources, crafting, 34-37
overhangs, spiders and, 59
pillar jumping, 35
redstone, 62
tunneling, 32

shovels, The Nether survival checklist, 224

signals, 160-161
  buttons, 162
  automatic doors, 170
  powered blocks, 165
detector rails, 162, 184
  levers, 162, 165
pressure plates, 162
  automatic doors, 173
detector rails, 184
  minecart rails, 162
redstone torches, 161, 165
tripwires, 162

signs
  building underwater, 150
  placement of, 141
Silk Touch enchantment, 198
silverfish spawners, 235

singleplayer games
  Creative mode, 14
  Survival mode, 13-15
skeletons, 51
  arrows and, 86, 95
  as resources, 56
  bones, 112
  fighting, 85-86
  potions, 206
  spider jockeys, 87
sleeping, 78
  beds
    crafting, 38-39
    taking with you, 41
  The End, 232-233
  The Nether, 232
time and, 38
  villages and, 209
sliding doors, building, 174-176
slimes, 52, 89
slots, quick access slots, 225
Slowness potions, 206
Smite enchantment, 196
sneaking, 71, 78, 113
snow blocks, 224
snow golems, fighting, 91-92
soft blocks, building underwater, 148, 151
soul sand
  brewing potions, 200-202
  The Nether, 228
spawners
  blaze spawners, 230
  disabling, 212
  silverfish spawners, 235
spawn points, 13, 15, 149
spiders, 51
cave spiders, 86-87
defending against, 84
ditches, crossing, 153
fermented spider eye, potions and, 205
fighting, 84-85
overhangs and, 59
spider jockeys, 87
string, 39, 84
uses for, 84
spiral staircases, mining and, 74-75
splash potions, 205
split-screen orientation, changing, 16
sprinting
combat and, 94
effects of, 53
hunger and, 53
squid, 134
stacking inventory items, 28
staging points, mining and, 78
staircases
The Nether, 227
spiral staircases, mining and, 74-75
straight staircases, mining and, 73-74
starting a new game, 6, 9-10
Star Trek, 138
stations (halfway), building tracks, 185
steel and flint
Nether Portals, 226
The Nether survival checklist, 225
stew, creating, 126
sticky piston harvesters, 120
stone buttons, 162
automatic doors, 170
powered blocks, 165
stone (material type), 48
storage, chests, 50
crafting, 50
opening, 50
sizes of, 50
storage area (inventory), 27
storage devices, flash drives, 7
storage minecarts, 182
storing enchantments with books, 194
straight staircases, mining and, 73-74
Strength potion, 204
string (spiders), 84
strongholds, 216
The End strongholds, 236
locating, 234
structures
abandoned mineshafts, 216
basins, 212
caverns, 212
desert temples, 213-214
dungeons, 215
The End strongholds, 236
jungle temples, 214
negative structures, 212
Nether fortresses
finding, 228-229
survival tips, 229-230
ravines, 212
spawners, disabling, 212
strongholds, 216
villages, 207
appearances of, 208
beds, 209
children, 208-210
commonality of, 207
interacting with inhabitants, 208-210
iron golems and, 209
sleeping in, 209
trading with inhabitants, 209-210
uses of, 208
zombies and, 208-211
sugar cane, 106
automated farms, 124
growing, 104
piston farms, 124
superflat worlds, 13
Survival mode, 13
Easy option, 15
Hard option, 15
Normal option, 15
Peaceful option, 14
underwater, building, 147
surviving the first night
checking inventory, 26-28
crafting a crafting table, 33
crafting beds, 38-39
crafting furnaces, 35-36
crafting heat sources, 34-35
crafting light sources, 34-37
crafting shelter, 31-35
crafting tool handles, 30
crafting tools, 30
crafting torches, 36-37
first-day tasks, 23-24
gathering wood, 25
perimeter structures, 33
trees, 25-26
Swiftness potion, 204
swimming, creepers and, 89
swimming pools, 144
switches. See levers
swords
blocking attacks, 94
crafting, 94
damage, dealing, 94
The End survival checklist, 233
fighting with, 52
The Nether survival checklist, 224

T

tables
building
bedside tables, 142
dining tables, 141
enchantment tables, 188
books, 192
casting enchantments, 192-193
obsidian, 189-191
taming animals, 129
teleporting, 17
temples
desert temples, 213-214
jungle temples, 214
tending farms, 104
tennis courts, building, 145
testing potions, 201
texture packs, 11
Thorns enchantment, 197
time, sleeping and, 38
TNT as output devices, 170
TNT Explodes option (More Options window), 12
Tolkien, J.R.R., 138
tools

- crafting
  - axes, 30
  - durability, 49
  - handles, 30
  - pickaxes, 30
- enchantments, 197-198
- The End survival checklist, 233
- improving, 47-48, 70
- mining, required equipment list, 66
- The Nether survival checklist, 224
- pickaxes, mining and, 66
- tools category (Creative mode inventory), 62

torches

- bedside tables and, 142
- crafting, 36-37
- farming and lighting, 104, 111
- mines, 66, 70
- The Nether, 228-229
- perimeters, 155
- redstone torches, 161
  - powered blocks, 165
  - vertical current, 176-177
- underwater, building, 148-150

towers, building, 155

tracks, building

- halfway stations, 185
- mobs, protecting tracks from, 186
- powered rails, 184
- zig zags, 184

- trapsdoors as output devices, 169

travel, sprinting, 53

treasure

- abandoned mineshafts, 216
- desert temples, 213-214
- dungeons, 215
- jungle temples, 214
- spawners, disabling, 212
- strongholds, 216

trees

- biomes, 25
- first-night survival, 25
- lumberjacking, 25-26
- trees (fantasy), growing, 143
- tripwires, 162

Trust Players option (More Options window), 12

tunnels, 32

- abandoned mineshafts, 216
- doors, importance of, 83
- lighting, 58
- The Nether, 227
- underground rails, 183

Tutorial, 8
Unbreaking enchantment, 198
underground
   abandoned mineshafts, 216
dungeons, 215
strongholds, 216
underground rails, 183
underwater bases, mob attacks, 45
underwater, building, 147, 151-152
   Creative mode, 147
doors, 150
enchantments, 153
flooding, 151
island spawn points, 149
ladders, 150
lighting, 148-150
location, 149
oxygen, 150
required equipment, 148
security, 153
signs, 150
soft blocks, 148, 151
Survival mode, 147
updates, farming and, 108

vegetables, harvesting, 55
vertical current, 176-177
villages, 207
   appearances of, 208
   beds, 209
   building next to, 139
   commonality of, 207
   inhabitants
      children, 208-210
      interacting with, 208-210
      trading with, 209-210
   iron golems and, 209
   sleeping in, 209
   uses of, 208
   wells, 212
   zombies and, 208-211

wall clocks, building, 143
wall maps, building, 143
walls
   building, 60, 157
   spider-proof walls, 84
water
   farming, 109, 113
   fishing, 133
   floating blocks, 140
   fountains, 144
The Nether, 224
obsidian, mining, 189-191
permanent watering holes, digging, 111
ponds, 144
pools, 144
security, 154
underwater, building, 147, 151-152
   Creative mode, 147
doors, 150
enchantments, 153
flooding, 151
island spawn points, 149
ladders, 150
lighting, 148-150
location, 149
oxygen, 150
required equipment, 148
security, 153
signs, 150
soft blocks, 148, 151
Survival mode, 147
water harvesters, 121-123
water affinity, 153
Weakness potions, 206
weapons, 93
bow and arrows, 97
crafting, 95-96
target practice, 96
critical hits, 93
enchantments, 196
Ender Dragon, defeating, 237, 240
The End survival checklist, 233
The Nether survival checklist, 224
swords
blocking attacks, 94
crafting, 94
damage, 94
fighting with, 52
web resources, Far Lands or Bust, 11
wells, villages and, 212
wheat, 106
farming, 103
growth cycles, 111
harvesting, 57, 112-114
wiring, redstone wiring, 163-164
wolves, 129
wood blocks, mining and, 66
wood buttons, 162
automatic doors, 170
powered blocks, 165
wood (material type), 47
wool
crafting, 39
dyeing, 130
spider string instead of, 39
worlds
biomes, Far Lands or Bust, 11
Create New World screen, selecting game mode, 10
Overworld, 24

X

XP (experience points)
earning, 195-196
enchantments, 187, 192
managing, 195-196

Y-Z

YouTube, finding architectural plans, 140
zig-zag tracks, building, 184
zombie pigmen, 90-91, 226-230
zombies, 51
arrows, crafting, 95
fighting, 82-83
potions, 206
rotten meat, 83
villages and, 208-211
wells, 212