A Word About Digging and Mining.

One of the basic things you do in Minecraft is, well, mining things. The words may change, but whether you're chopping or punching wood, digging dirt, or mining stone and ores, the routine is the same: Wield an appropriate tool (which may be your fist), put the crosshairs on a block, and *hold* the left mouse button until the block "breaks" and drops as an item for you to pick up. If something is taking a long time to break, you are probably not using the right tool, so stop hitting it unless you just want to get rid of the block, as you won't get anything back when it finally breaks.

The rules for tools are as follows:

- Using the proper tool to break a block will be much faster. Wood and dirt type blocks don't absolutely need a tool, you can break them (more slowly) without one. Note that hitting blocks with anything but one of the standard tools is equivalent to using your fist.
  - For dirt, sand, and gravel, the tool is a shovel.
  - For wood and wooden items, the tool is an axe.
  - For stone and ores, you need a pickaxe (your fist will *eventually* break the block, but it won't drop as an item).
- The better the material a tool is made of, the faster the tool retrieves and breaks items, and the longer it will last before wearing out. For pickaxes in particular, better tools can harvest and collect more advanced ores (a list of ores is below). In order, the options are wood, stone, iron, and diamond. (You may also see gold tools, but those are nearly useless -- fast, but they wear out very quickly, and a gold pickaxe can only mine the blocks that a wooden one can.)
  - Coal and stone can be mined with a wooden (or gold) pickaxe
  - iron and lapis lazuli require a stone pickaxe
  - All other ores require an iron or better pickaxe.
  - Obsidian, however, can only be mined by a diamond pickaxe.

Death and Your First Shelter

When you die in Minecraft, all items you were carrying or wearing in your inventory are scattered around your point of death, while you respawn elsewhere. Until you sleep in a bed, you will spawn somewhere within 10 blocks of the world spawn point. This includes the first time when you started the game, so you can respawn anywhere within 20 blocks of where you first entered the world.

The traditional advice is to build your first shelter as close as possible to the spawn point, so if you die, you can easily find it again, or even spawn in a now-protected area. Even with the variation in where you'll come back, it's good to have a lit shelter nearby the spawn point. However, a problem with sheltering near spawn is that if your death site is too close to where you respawn, your items may despawn while you're trying to survive the night. (See below for more details.)

In any case, your *very* first shelter should be something very basic, even a hole in the ground. This is so you can spend the least time working on shelter, and have the maximum time possible to gather resources. If you've got a couple dozen blocks of dirt (and especially if you have no torches), it's perfectly OK to spend your first few nights atop a pillar. See below for more advice on early and emergency shelters.

Like any dropped items in Minecraft, the items you drop when you die will disappear after 5 minutes, unless you're more than 180 blocks or so away, that is outside of chunk update radius. The problem is that if you died at night, you will find yourself stranded without your weapons and armor, at night, so

you are quite likely to get killed again, or at least find your stuff guarded by monsters. Meanwhile, some of the monsters can actually pick up your stuff and use it against you! And if you spawned near your death scene, that 5-minute timer can easily go by before you can actually get back to and keep your stuff.

Combining these issues leads to a new strategy, at least for single-player. You can still mark your spawn point, but realize you might end up anywhere within 20 blocks of that. Then, while getting your initial resources, move away from the spawn point, trying to get 200 blocks or so away before you build your shelter. (Using the debug screen can help with checking the distance.) That way, if you get killed at night, you might spend an unpleasant "evening", but if you *wait* until dawn comes and the monsters leave, you can trot right back and hopefully retrieve your dropped items.

However, the above only applies until you have made and used a bed in a secure shelter. Once you've done that, you have a new option: If you get killed at night, you will respawn next to your bed, so you can just go back to sleep, and wake up the next morning -- the items don't "expire" while you're asleep. It still may be worth keeping your bed out of chunk update range from where you're endangering yourself, but at least you won't be stranded outside at night.

Food and Hunger

Once you have tools and shelter, your next priority will be food. Hunger will take a while to hit, so it shouldn't be a problem on your first day, but you'll try to pick up *some* food for when it does. However, after you've been moving around for a while, your food bar will begin rippling and start to decrease. If your food bar drops below 90%, you will not regenerate health, and if it gets to 30%, you can't sprint. If the hunger bar goes down to empty, you will begin *losing* health. Unless you're in Hard mode (and a beginning player *shouldn't* be), you can't actually *die* of hunger, but you will go down to 1 health point (🖤) in Normal mode (or half your health ❤️❤️🤍❤️🖤 in Easy mode), and that leaves you quite vulnerable.

Walking, mining blocks, and even placing blocks all cost some hunger, but all of those are minimal compared to the items below. These are the things that cause the most hunger, in order of cost.

- Healing damage of any sort. Avoid taking falls of more than 3 blocks, drowning yourself, or otherwise taking damage, as healing damage costs a *lot* of hunger. *Especially* avoid...
- Fighting: Both attacking mobs and receiving damage cost hunger, even before you start trying to heal damage. (10 blows either way matches healing 🖤, one health point.) You will need to slaughter a few animals, but pick your fights carefully.
- Sprinting. If you double-tap the forward movement key (W by default), you will sprint. This moves somewhat faster, but it also uses a lot of food, especially if you go any distance. (30 meters matches healing 🖤.)
- Jumping. Obviously, you'll need to jump some just to get around, but don't bounce around randomly or unnecessarily. (15 jumps matches healing 🖤) Sprinting jumps are especially costly, 4 times as much as a regular jump.