

Minecraft is a sandbox game that allows the player to play in many different ways. This analysis will just be focusing on the default single player survival mode. The systems the game sets up are very simple: hit things to collect other things and use things to build other things.

The player is able to hit just about anything and get something for it. For example, at the start of the game, the player will probably hit trees to get wood. The player can then craft the wood into blocks and make sticks from the wood blocks. Using sticks and blocks, the player can build simple tools, such as a wooden axe, that lets them hit things more efficiently, for example another tree, which will get them more wood in a far shorter time than by punching a tree. This simple mechanic creates a positive reinforcement whereby the player is always getting something useful, and as they progress they are able to get things more easily.

Once the player has armed themselves with tools, they can quickly set about creating the world that they desire. The ability for players to create a world into what they desire essentially lets them play God. The first shelter that the player will likely build is to simply hide from the monsters that come out at night. Once they are able to find a decent place to start mining (quickly of course, because of the tools that they created with the wood they got from hitting a tree), they can build a much nicer structure with the stone blocks that they dig up. Stone can be used to craft better tools. Eventually they will likely find iron ore, which allows them to create even better tools.

The way that the game constantly supplies the player with slightly better resources can be almost addictive. As the player mines deeper into the world, they will encounter more dangers, such as more powerful monsters. The player will be rewarded for taking the risk however, by gather better resources for their efforts. These better resources can be used to craft more advanced tools, weapons, and armour, which will enable them to better survive the monsters that they encounter while searching for even better resources.

As the player progresses, they may find more advanced components to use in crafting, which allows them to make use of Redstone. Redstone allows the player to create Boolean logic gates. Boolean logic gates fit in well with the other systems in Minecraft. They are easy to use yet enable the player to construct an almost limitless number of impressive creations. The simplicity of Redstone, again, draws the player deeper into the game with immediate rewards while not requiring a lot in the way of complexity.

For players that wish to remove the chaos of the world, they are free to reshape the world in whatever way they wish. There can be an odd satisfaction obtained by simply leveling out the area that surrounds your building. You can extinguish volcanoes, create rivers, or make your very own Mount Rushmore. This control, wrapped in simplicity, allows the player to create virtually anything they desire.