

Markus Persson

Markus Persson, better known as Notch, is the creator of the video game Minecraft.

He was born in the 1st of June 1979 in Stockholm, Sweden. Until he was seven, he lived in a small town called Edsbyn. The town is surrounded by forests and he spent a lot of time walking in the trees. He also enjoyed playing with Lego, which he used to make complex designs. His father brought him a computer when he was seven. Markus loved it and wrote his first computer program when he was eight.

Persson did not finish High School. He studied an online computer programming course, and he was able to get a job working with computers. He designed his games with a friend, Jakob Porsér, and they made their own games in their spare time. In 2009 Persson and Porsér also set up their company Mojang. Mojang is the Swedish word for “gadget”.

Minecraft was released on the 17th of May 2009. Persson had written the code in just one week. He was in a hurry to get on to his next game. Minecraft was a new type of game. The player is able to build whatever they like, from a simple house to a grand castle. They have to battle destructive creepers and zombies. Unlike the smooth images usually used in video games, Minecraft’s blocky graphics are like the Lego bricks that Persson loved to play with. The game is set in a forest.

The game can be changed by the players, who can write their own “mods” which allow them to add new items and enemies. Youtubers make videos of themselves playing the game. Persson also interacted with players, as his avatar Notch.

In June 2010 Minecraft was making enough money for Persson and Porsér to work full-time at Mojang. The company added more and more platforms so that Minecraft could be played on consoles, tablets and phones as well as PCs. Minecraft has now sold over 70 million copies.

By 2012, Persson was becoming unhappy. His father had died and he divorced his wife (they had only been married for a year). He felt that he was not a good businessman, and Mojang was becoming a large company.

In 2014 he tweeted “Anyone want to buy my share of Mojang so I can move on with my life?” At the time Minecraft players were unhappy about some changes he was making to the game. At first he meant it as a joke, but a lot of companies wanted to buy it! In September 2014, Microsoft bought Mojang for \$2.5 billion (about £1.7 billion). Persson bought a luxurious mansion in California with his share of the money.

Minecraft is Persson’s most famous game; however did you know that he has developed at least twenty other games?



Markus Persson

- 1) Who is Notch?
- 2) In which country was Markus Persson born?
- 3) Why was Markus able to spend so much time walking in the trees?
- 4) In your opinion, why is Minecraft set in a forest?
- 5) What do 'mods' do in the game?
- 6) Why, do you think, Youtubers make videos of themselves playing Minecraft?
- 7) According to the text, how many copies of Minecraft have been sold?
- 8) Give two reasons why Persson was feeling unhappy in 2012.
- 9) *Persson bought a luxurious mansion...*
Draw a ring around the word that is closest in meaning to *luxurious*.

grand large plain small
- 10) Do you think that Persson is pleased that he created Minecraft?
Give reasons for your answer.

Markus Persson

- 1) Who is Notch?
Markus Persson, the creator of Minecraft.
- 2) In which country was Markus Persson born?
Sweden.
- 3) Why was Markus able to spend so much time walking in the trees?
His town was surrounded by forests.
- 4) In your opinion, why is Minecraft set in a forest?
Because it is like the place where Markus lived when he was a child.
- 5) What do 'mods' do in the game?
Allow players to add new items and enemies.
- 6) Why, do you think, Youtubers make videos of themselves playing Minecraft?
Answers might include...
 - * **To show off their creations and achievements,**
 - * **To teach others how to create objects in the game.**
 - * **To be like those who they admire / others who are already doing this.**
- 7) According to the text, how many copies of Minecraft have been sold?
Over 70 million.
- 8) Give two reasons why Persson was feeling unhappy in 2012.
Answers include...
 - * **His father had died.**
 - * **He had divorced his wife.**
 - * **He felt that he was not a good businessman.**
- 9) *Persson bought a luxurious mansion...*
Draw a ring around the word that is closest in meaning to *luxurious*.

grand large plain small
- 10) Do you think that Persson is pleased that he created Minecraft?
Give reasons for your answer.
Answers will vary.

Markus Persson

Markus Persson, better known as Notch, is the creator of the bestselling video game Minecraft.

He was born in the 1st of June 1979 in Stockholm, Sweden. His Swedish father worked on the railways and his Finnish mother was a nurse. As a young child, he lived in the small rural town of Edsbyn. The town is surrounded by forests and he spent a lot of time walking in the trees. He also loved to play with Lego, which he used to create complex designs. When he was seven, his father brought home a Commodore 128 computer, one of the first home computers available. Young Markus was immediately hooked and wrote his first computer program when he was eight.

Persson did not finish High School. His mother persuaded him to study an online computer programming course, and he was able to get a job working with computers. He worked for a few different companies and in 2004 he got a job at king.com, publishers of Candy Crush. He met another games developer, Jakob Porsér, and the two began to work together on games in their spare time. Their games became successful but there was a problem. King.com did not want to employ people who were running their own games company. In 2009, Persson moved to an employer who was happy for him to develop his own games. Persson and Porsér also founded their company Mojang at this time. They chose Mojang as it is the Swedish word for "gadget".

Minecraft was released on the 17th of May 2009. Persson had written the code in just one week. He published it quickly as he was in a hurry to get on to his next game. In fact he did not even think it was finished. Minecraft was a new type of game. Instead of clearly defined goals, the player is able to build their own creations, from a simple house to a grand castle. They have to battle destructive creepers and undead zombies. Unlike the highly polished images usually used in video games, Minecraft's blocky graphics are very similar to the Lego he loved to play with. The setting is influenced by his young years spent in Edsbyn, surrounded by forest.

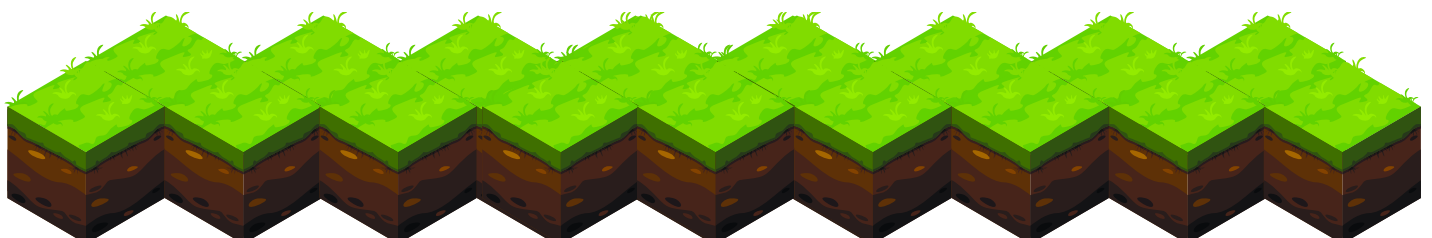
One reason for Minecraft's huge success was the online community that quickly sprang up around it. The game can be customised by the players, who can write their own "mods" which allow them to add new items and enemies. This community includes Youtubers who make videos of themselves playing the game. Persson also interacted with players in the game, as his avatar Notch.

Minecraft at first sold for \$6 (about £4.20) a copy, and by June 2010 about 400 copies were being downloaded every day. This was enough money for Persson and Porsér to leave their jobs and work full-time at Mojang. The company added more and more platforms so that Minecraft could be played on consoles, tablets and phones as well as PCs. To date, Minecraft has sold over 70 million copies.

By 2012, Persson was becoming unhappy. His father had recently died and he divorced his wife (they had only been married for a year). He felt that he was not a good businessman, and Mojang was becoming a large company.

In 2014 he tweeted "Anyone want to buy my share of Mojang so I can move on with my life?" At the time Minecraft players were complaining about some changes he was making to the game. Although at first he meant it as a sort of joke, there was an enormous amount of interest and in September 2014 Microsoft bought Mojang for \$2.5 billion (about £1.7 billion). Persson bought a luxurious mansion in California with his share of the money, reportedly outbidding Beyonce and Jay Z to buy the \$70 million (about £50 million) home.

Minecraft is Persson's most famous game; however did you know that he has developed at least twenty other games during his career?



Markus Persson

- 1) What is Markus Persson's nickname?
- 2) What did Persson's parents do for a living?
- 3) What was a Commodore 128?
- 4) *Young Markus was immediately hooked...*
Hooked can mean that something is caught with a hook. What does *hooked* mean in the sentence above?
- 5) Why did Persson and Porsér stop working at king.com?
- 6) How long did it take to write the code for Minecraft?
- 7) Using the information in the text, give one reason why Minecraft was a new type of game.
- 8) Using evidence from the text, explain why Minecraft was such a huge success.
- 9) Give three reasons why Persson was feeling unhappy in 2012.
- 10) Do you think that Persson is pleased that he created Minecraft?
Give reasons for your answer.

Markus Persson

1) What is Markus Persson's nickname?

Notch.

2) What did Persson's parents do for a living?

His father worked on the railways and his mother was a nurse.

3) What was a Commodore 128?

One of the first home computers available.

4) *Young Markus was immediately hooked...*

Hooked can mean that something is caught with a hook. What does *hooked* mean in the sentence above?

Addicted (to his new computer).

5) Why did Persson and Porsér stop working at *king.com*?

Because they didn't want to employ people who were running their own games company.

6) How long did it take to write the code for Minecraft?

One week.

7) Using the information in the text, give one reason why Minecraft was a new type of game.

* **It didn't have clearly defined goals.**

* **The player is able to build their own creations.**

* **The game has blocky graphics, unlike the highly polished images usually used in video games.**

8) Using evidence from the text, explain why Minecraft was such a huge success.

Answers may include...

* **Because it was a new type of game.**

* **Because of the online community that sprung up around it.**

* **Because the game can be customised by the players.**

9) Give three reasons why Persson was feeling unhappy in 2012.

* **His father had died.**

* **He had divorced his wife.**

* **He felt that he was not a good businessman.**

10) Do you think that Persson is pleased that he created Minecraft?

Give reasons for your answer.

Answers will vary.

Markus Persson

Markus Persson, better known as Notch, is the creator of the bestselling video game Minecraft.

He was born on the 1st of June 1979 in Stockholm, Sweden. His Swedish father, Biger, worked on the railways and his Finnish mother, Ritva, was a nurse. As a young child, he lived in the small rural town of Edsbyn. The town is surrounded by forests and, when he lived there, he spent a lot of time walking in the trees. Another of his pursuits was Lego, which he used to create intricate and complex designs. When he was seven, his father brought home a Commodore 128 computer, one of the first home computers available. Young Markus was immediately hooked and wrote his first computer program when he was eight.

Despite not having finished high school, due to his talent at coding Persson became a games developer. His mother persuaded him to study an online computer programming course, and with those skills he was able to gain employment in his chosen field. He worked for a few different companies and in 2004 he got a job at king.com, publishers of Candy Crush. There he met another games developer, Jakob Porsér, and the two began to work together on games in their spare time. Their games became successful but there was a problem. King.com did not want to employ people who were running their own games company. In 2009, Persson moved to an employer who was happy for him to develop his own games. Persson and Porsér also founded their famous company Mojang at this time. They chose Mojang as it is the Swedish word for "gadget".

Minecraft was released on the 17th of May 2009. Persson had written the code in just one week. He published it quickly as he was in a hurry to get on to his next game, in fact he did not even consider it to be finished. Minecraft was a revolutionary game. Instead of clearly defined goals the player is able to build their own creations, whether a simple house or a grand castle, while battling destructive creepers and undead zombies. In contrast to the highly polished images usually associated with video games, Minecraft's blocky graphics show the influence of his childhood interest in Lego, and it is clear that the setting is inspired by the time he spent in Edsbyn, surrounded by forest.

One factor in Minecraft's huge success was the online community that quickly sprang up around it. The game can be customised by the players, who can write their own "mods" allowing the addition of further items, enemies and mechanics. This community includes Youtubers who make videos of themselves playing the game. Persson also interacted with players in the game, as his avatar Notch.

Minecraft initially sold for \$6 (about £4.20) a copy, and by June 2010 downloads were running at 400 copies a day. This was enough money for Persson and Porsér leave their jobs and to go full time at Mojang. The company added more and more platforms so that Minecraft could be played on consoles, tablets and phones as well as PCs. To date, Minecraft has sold over 70 million copies.

By 2012, Persson was becoming unhappy. His father had recently died and he divorced his wife (they had only been married for a year). He felt that he was not suited to being a businessman, and Mojang was becoming a large company.

In 2014 he tweeted "Anyone want to buy my share of Mojang so I can move on with my life?" At the time Minecraft players were complaining about some changes he was making to the game and Persson was disillusioned with the whole thing. Although at first he meant it as a joke, there was an enormous amount of interest and in September 2014 Microsoft bought Mojang for \$2.5 billion (about £1.7 billion). Persson bought a luxurious mansion in California with his share of the money, reportedly outbidding Beyonce and Jay Z to buy the \$70 million (about £50 million) home.

Minecraft is Persson's most famous game; however did you know that he has developed at least twenty other games during his career?



Markus Persson

- 1) What is Ritva's relationship to Markus Persson?

2. Use the text to complete the missing words in this sentence:
Another of his pursuits was Lego, which he used to create _____ and _____ designs.

3. Using evidence from the text, explain how Persson became successful, even though he didn't finish high school.

4. What is the purpose of this text? Tick the correct answer:
 To persuade people to buy Minecraft,
 To teach people how to play Minecraft,
 To describe Markus Persson's life.

- 5) In your opinion, why was the Swedish word for 'gadget' used for the company name?

- 6) *Minecraft was a revolutionary game.*
Write a dictionary definition for *revolutionary* in this context.

- 7) Using the information in the text, explain how Minecraft was different from other games.

- 8) How did Persson's childhood influence the development of Minecraft?

- 9) ... *Persson was disillusioned with the whole thing.*
Draw a ring around the word that is closest in meaning to *disillusioned*.

arrogant disappointed enthusiastic humbled

- 10) Describe how Persson may have felt after selling Minecraft. Explain your answer.

Markus Persson

- 1) What is Ritva's relationship to Markus Persson?
She is his mother.

2. Use the text to complete the missing words in this sentence:

Another of his pursuits was Lego, which he used to create **intricate** and **complex** designs.

3. Using evidence from the text, explain how Persson became successful, even though he didn't finish high school.

He had a talent for coding and he used these skills to get jobs.

4. What is the purpose of this text? Tick the correct answer:

- To persuade people to buy Minecraft,
 To teach people how to play Minecraft,
 To describe Markus Persson's life.

- 5) In your opinion, why was the Swedish word for 'gadget' used for the company name?

Answers will vary but may include references to technology and the use of gadgets by Persson and Porsér.

- 6) *Minecraft was a revolutionary game.*

Write a dictionary definition for *revolutionary* in this context.

Brand new / different from other games / extremely innovative.

- 7) Using the information in the text, explain how Minecraft was different from other games.

* **It didn't have clearly defined goals.**

* **The player is able to build their own creations.**

* **The game has blocky graphics, unlike the highly polished images usually used in video games.**

- 8) How did Persson's childhood influence the development of Minecraft?

The blocky graphics are like Lego (which he played with as a child) and the setting is inspired by the forest around his childhood town of Edsbyn.

- 9) *... Persson was disillusioned with the whole thing.*

Draw a ring around the word that is closest in meaning to *disillusioned*.

arrogant

disappointed

enthusiastic

humbled

- 10) Describe how Persson may have felt after selling Minecraft. Explain your answer...

Answers will vary.