

Hacking Minecraft Pi with Python

Minecraft is a popular sandbox open-world building game. A free version of Minecraft is available for the Raspberry Pi; it also comes with a programming interface. This means you can write commands and scripts in Python code to build things in the game automatically. It's a great way to learn Python!

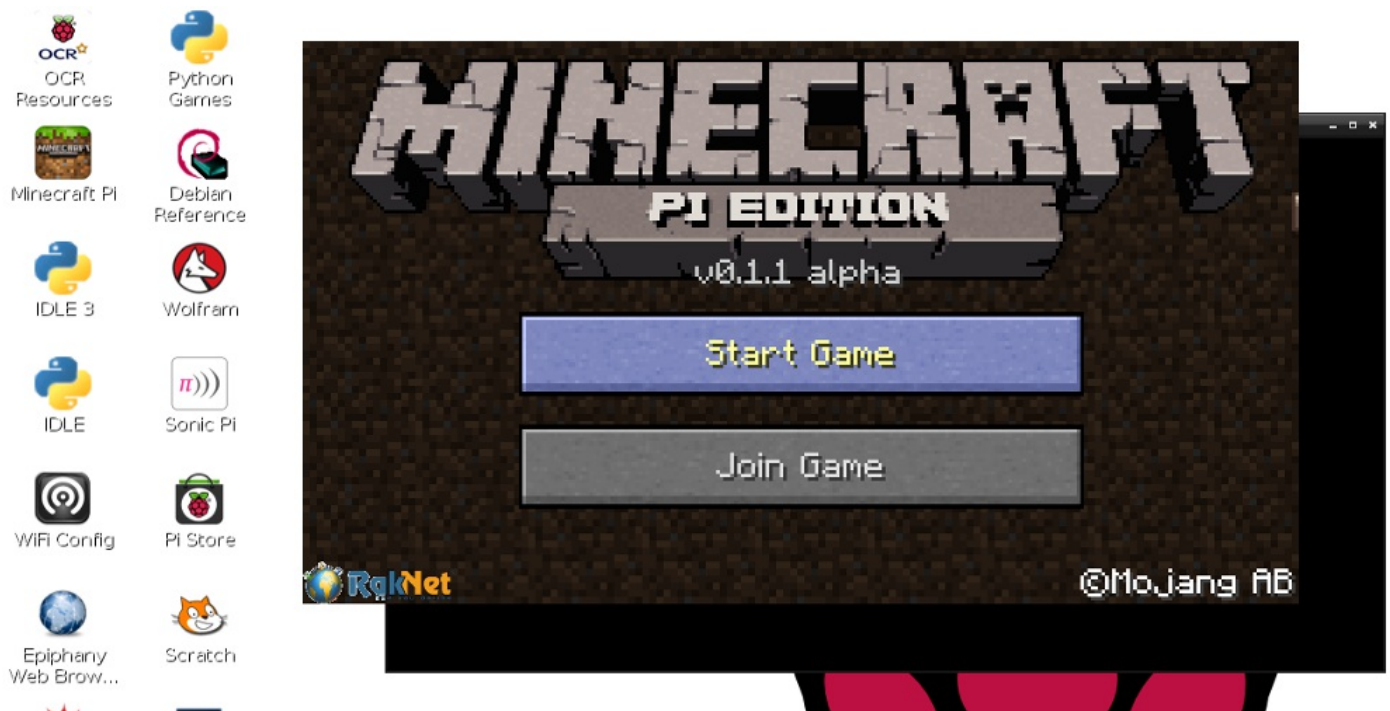


In this activity, you will learn to:

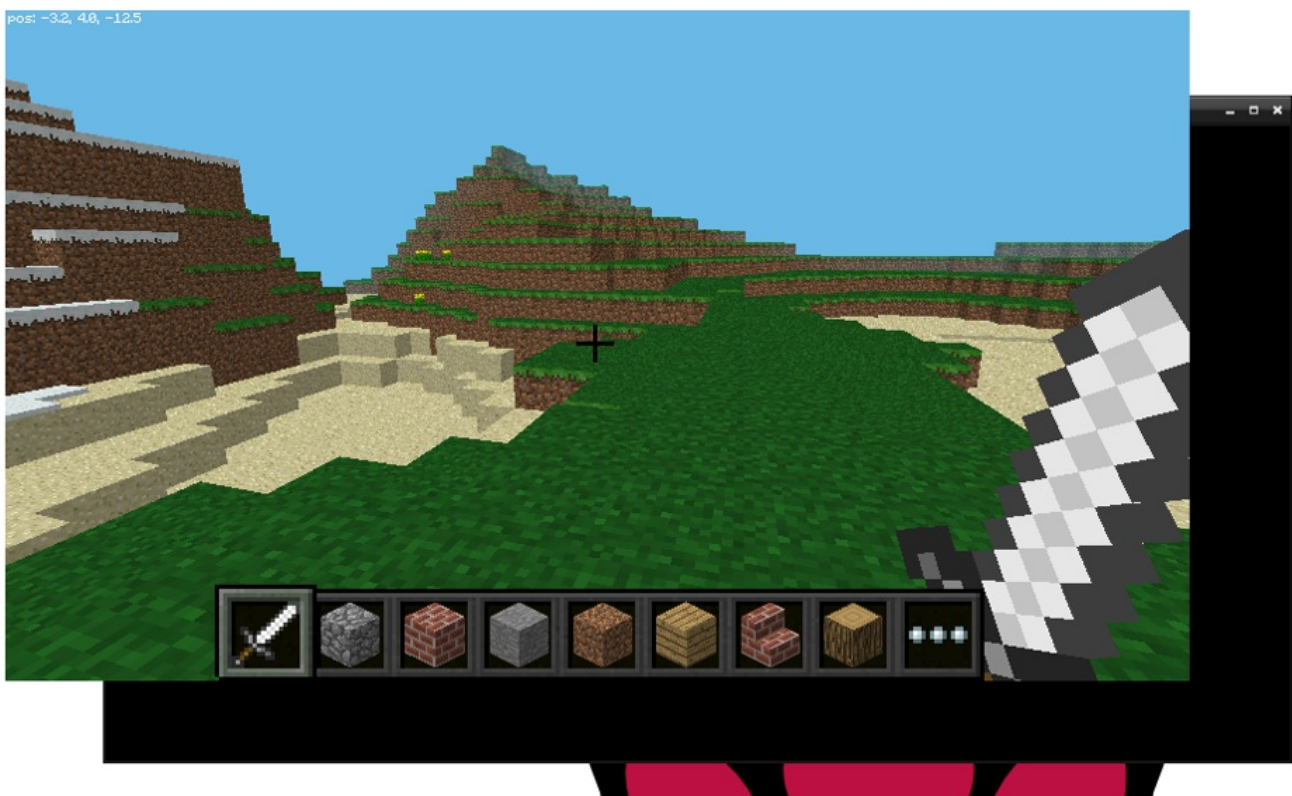
- How to access Minecraft Pi and create a new world
- How to use the Python programming environment IDLE to connect to Minecraft Pi
- How to use the Minecraft Pi Python API to place blocks to build castles and get the players location
- How to use the Explorer HAT addon board as an input

Run Minecraft

To run Minecraft, double click the desktop icon or enter `minecraft-pi` in the terminal.



When Minecraft Pi has loaded, click on **Start Game**, followed by **Create new**. You'll notice that the containing window is offset slightly. This means to drag the window around you have to grab the title bar behind the Minecraft window.



You are now in a game of Minecraft! Go walk around, hack things, and build things!

Use the mouse to look around and use the following keys on the keyboard:

Key	Action
W	Forward
A	Left
S	Backward
D	Right
E	Inventory
Space	Jump
Double Space	Fly / Fall
Esc	Pause / Game menu
Tab	Release mouse cursor

You can select an item from the quick draw panel with the mouse's scroll wheel (or use the numbers on your keyboard), or press **E** and select something from the inventory.



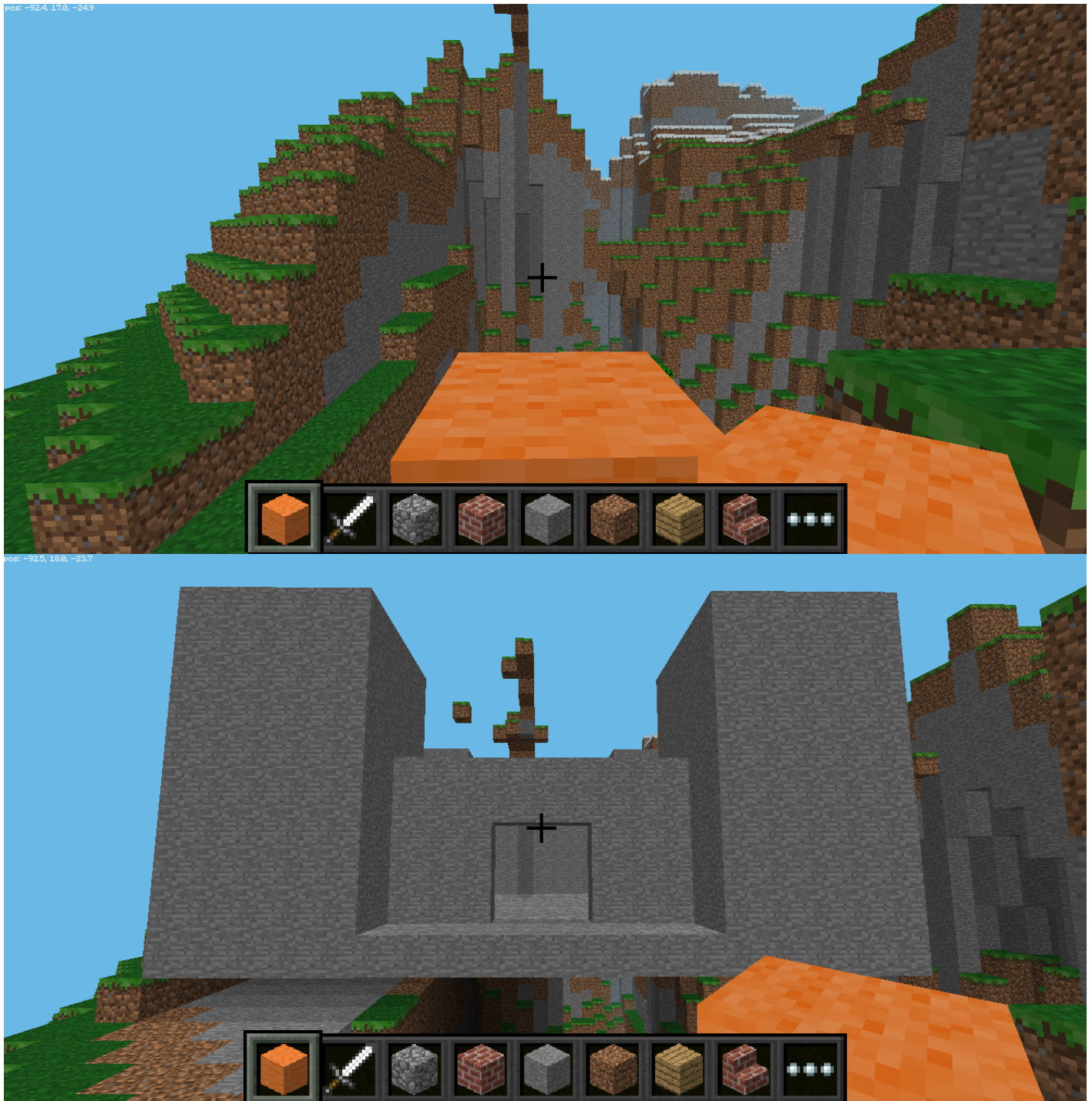
You can also double tap the space bar to fly into the air. You'll stop flying when you release the space bar, and if you double tap it again you'll fall back to the ground.

pos: -3.2, 30.2, -12.5



With the sword in your hand, you can click on blocks in front of you to remove them (or to dig). With a block in your hand, you can use right click to place that block in front of you, or left click to remove a block.

Building castles with Python and Minecraft



Now is time to start building something! We could build a house, but that's a bit boring. What if we build an entire castle every time you place a wool block?

Getting started

Bring your focus away from the Minecraft by pressing the **Tab** key, which will free your mouse. Open Python 3 (or IDLE3) and open a new window (**File > New window**) and save it as Castle-builder.py (**File > Save**)

Then type the following in the python window:

```
from mcpi.minecraft import Minecraft

mc = Minecraft.create()
```

This imports the Minecraft library and creates a connection to the Minecraft game so we can change it. It is required at the start of every Minecraft pi program.

Because we want to build a castle EVERY time we place a wool block, we need to use a function. Functions allow you to separate up your code into smaller chunks and make it reusable. Most functions look like a bit like this:

```
def functionName(variable1,variable2):
    doSomethingWith(Variable2)
```

We can "pass" the function a variable each time we use it. To build the castle we will give our functions the players position so it can always know where they are. Functions are all about splitting code up, so we will start with creating a function to make some space for our castle.

Warning - Make sure you follow the indentation in the example code, in Python, indentation is very important.

```
def clear space(x,y,z):
    mc.setBlocks(x+9,y-2,z+5,x-9,y+10,z+30,0)
```

The x,y,z variables are the player's position (`x` and `z` are the walking directions (forward/back and left/right) and `y` is up/down.). The final number (or paramter) in the mc.setBlocks is what block we are using, in this case air. Next we need to create another function and write the code to make the towers closest to us.

```
def towers(x,y,z,block):  
    mc.setBlocks(x+5, y-1, z+10, x+9, y+8, z+14, block)  
    mc.setBlocks(x+6, y-1, z+11, x+8, y+8, z+13, 0)  
  
    mc.setBlocks(x-5, y-1, z+10, x-9, y+8, z+14, block)  
    mc.setBlocks(x-6, y-1, z+11, x-8, y+8, z+13, 0)
```

The `block` variable is like the zero from before, but now we can change it to any block (even lava!). Each tower is made by making one large cuboid of stone using mc.setBlocks() (which fills a volume with a given block), and then making a smaller cuboid of air inside using the same type of command. The Last two towers are very similar, though instead this time we need to move them further away from the player by increasing their z coordinates.

```
mc.setBlocks(x+5, y-1, z+24, x+9, y+8, z+28, block)  
mc.setBlocks(x+6, y-1, z+25, x+8, y+8, z+27, 0)  
  
mc.setBlocks(x-5, y-1, z+24, x-9, y+8, z+28, block)  
mc.setBlocks(x-6, y-1, z+25, x-8, y+8, z+27, 0)
```

Now we have the towers set up, lets give ourselves some protection, and build some walls.

```
def walls(x,y,z,block):  
    mc.setBlocks(x+4, y-1, z+12, x-4, y+4, z+12, block)  
    mc.setBlocks(x+7, y-1, z+15, x+7, y+4, z+23, block)  
    mc.setBlocks(x-7, y-1, z+15, x-7, y+4, z+23, block)  
    mc.setBlocks(x+4, y-1, z+26, x-4, y+4, z+26, block)
```

Almost there! now we need to add the most important features of the castle: a floor to stand on and a door so we can actually get into the castle.

```
def door(x,y,z):  
    mc.setBlocks(x+1, y, z+12, x-1, y+2, z+12, 0)  
def floor(x,y,z,block):  
    mc.setBlocks(x-9, y-1, z+10, x+9, y-1, z+28, block)
```

Tying all the functions together

That's all the setup finished. We now need to write a way for the computer to know when and where to build our castle. We are going to use the player's position using

`mc.player.getPos()` and what block they are standing on with `mc.getBlock()`

which gives the type of block at a given position.

We also need to assign which block we are going to use by assigning the `block` variable to 1, which is stone.

We will need to add a simple while loop to our program. In this case, an infinite loop to check where the player is standing.

```
block=1
while True:
    x, y, z = mc.player.getPos()
    blockBelow=mc.getBlock(x, y-1, z)
```

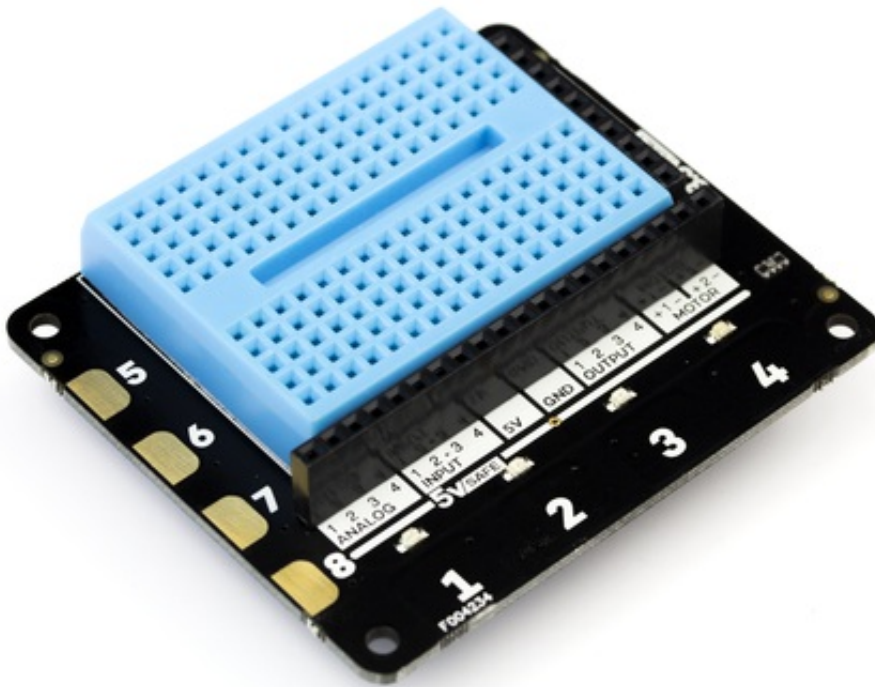
For this program we are going to check using an `if` statement if the user is standing on orange wool (which has an ID of 35).

If they are, we call our functions from earlier and change the block we are standing on to something other than orange wool with `mc.setBlock()` (or it will keep trying to build a castle until the player moves).

```
if blockBelow == 35:
    clearSpace(x,y,z)
    towers(x,y,z,block)
    walls(x,y,z,block)
    floor(x,y,z,block)
    door(x,y,z)
    mc.setBlock(x, y-1, z,block)
```

You're done! Save and run the program and change to Minecraft. An an orange wool block and on the floor and then step on it. BOOM! Instant castle. What if we could link real life with minecraft? What if we could press a button and have the castle built for us? OR press another button and build another castle made out of LAVA? Let's find out!

Building castles with the Explorer HAT



The Explorer is a very nice general purpose add-on board for the Raspberry Pi, also known as a HAT (Hardware Attachment on Top).

The explorer hat comes with four capacitive touch buttons which work the same way a smartphone's screen does. We are going to assign each button a block, so that every time we press the button a castle made of that block will be built.

First go to the start of the program where we put:

```
from mcpi import minecraft
```

and add below it:

```
import explorerhat as eh  
pressed=0
```

This allows us to use the explorer hat's library, and declares a variable for if a button is being pressed. Next go to our while loop, and add before it a new function:

```
def buttonPress(channel, event):  
    block1=1  
    block2=3  
    block3=5  
    block4=20  
    global block  
    global pressed  
    if channel > 4:  
        return  
    if event == 'press':  
        pressed=1  
        if channel==1:  
            block=block1  
        if channel==2:  
            block=block2  
        if channel==3:  
            block=block3  
        if channel==4:  
            block=block4
```

This function changes the block type that our castle will be made of, depending on which button has been pressed. The 'channel' variable is the button, and the event is whether it has been pressed or not. The block variables are what block the house will be made from. You can change them to be anything else, but for now we'll leave them as 1, 3, 5 and 20 which will build the castle out of stone, dirt, wood planks or glass. The last thing we need to do is change the While loop so it is checking for a button press. First find our

```
blockBelow=mc.getBlock(x, y-1, z)
```

and change it to.

```
eh.touch.pressed(buttonPress)
```

This tells our function from earlier if a button has been pressed, and which one. Next find our IF statement and change it so it reads:

```
if pressed== 1:
```

Now our `if` statement checks if a button has been pressed and it has runs our castle building code. The last thing we need to do is set our pressed variable to 0 otherwise the program will continue to build castles forever. Because we don't need to change the block under us any more find

```
mc.setBlock(x, y-1, z, stone)
```

and change it to

```
pressed=0
```

And we're done! Jump back into Minecraft and every time you press one of the explorer HAT's buttons, a castle will appear!

Challenges

- Try changing the block IDs, see if you can build a castle out of other blocks like TNT. What happens if you build it out of sand?
- Can you make a bigger castle? Perhaps thicker walls or taller towers?
- What about perhaps playing with the Explorer HAT build in LEDs. To use them, use `eh.light.yellow.on()`. You can try using different colours.

Credits

This resource was created by Joseph Thomas (@jthomascoop), Zach Igielman (@ZacharyIgielman) and Yasmin Bey (@RPi_Yaz14) and is partially based on the Raspberry Pi Foundation resource, "Getting started with Minecraft Pi"
<https://www.raspberrypi.org/learning/getting-started-with-minecraft-pi/>