

GAME REVIEW**SHAHRUKH IKHTEAR**

It's no secret that PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds has achieved mass popularity in a very short span of time. The game skyrocketed to 3rd position in Steam's "Most Played" list in about 3 months. But what is it about PUBG that drew in 4 million players? The answer to that question is pretty multi-faceted, so let's look at what makes PUBG special.

The premise of the game is simple, you are airdropped into a 64 square-kilometre island with no weapons along with 99 others (you read that right, 100 people in a huge open world). You must scrounge for weapons and ammo from various locations and end up the last man standing. You can choose from three modes: solo, duo, and team. So, here's how it goes down - you get to pick when you eject out of the plane and you have to pick an appropriate LZ. There are hot spots in the map such as towns and large buildings where a majority of people will be dropping since those locations have the highest chance of having the best weapons and armour. People drop in and start scurrying for the nearest building. Some poor souls will be on the receiving end of a couple of shotgun shells in the opening minutes while others will gather gear and be on their way to the nearest abandoned place.

After the weaklings get sorted out, the real fun begins. At this point, every person will have backpacks, armour vests, helmets, and good weapons. So, it becomes a test of who plays the thinking game better. Battlegrounds favours the clever gamer more than the sharpshooter. For example, in one game, I was approaching 4 buildings side by side with each other to find shelter. Three buildings had their doors open while one's door was closed. I began to suspect there might be someone in the closed-door

building. I keep my sights trained on the suspicious building. Surely enough, someone peeks out their head and promptly receives a sniper bullet to the face. I smirked and went upstairs to loot his assault rifle.

Rather than fast reflexes, PUBG is more about assessing situations, picking your battles, planning your strategy, and being prepared to make the best of overwhelming odds. Many a time will you find yourself in the middle of a crossfire between multiple snipers, cornered in a small shack, or about to be run over by a car that appeared out of nowhere. Make no mistake, you will need good aim in firefights as the guns have a lot of recoil and bullet spread; managing your crosshairs and leading your targets become crucial in getting kills. And it feels amazing to be able to secure kills on your opponents because every firefight is an adrenaline-fueled slugfest that leaves your heart pumping every single time.

There will be random airdrops from time to time. These drops contain the best weapons in the entire game but the drop location becomes a death zone so you'll have to weigh your risks and proceed accordingly. However, earning a powerful AWM sniper rifle in the process does make life easier for you.

PUBG also has a clever way of dealing with campers. At any point in time, a portion of the map becomes a "red zone". It is basically a circular portion of a particular place in map where players have been to. The entire zone becomes filled with random explosions that can kill players with one hit. Also, you might be thinking how any game ends in such a huge map, but this is where PUBG's mechanic comes into play. The map outlines a large circle on the map which becomes the play zone. You must make your way to the play zone or else you will start taking damage after a particular amount of time passes. This circle becomes smaller as the game pro-

gresses and in the end, you'll be forced into a miniscule portion of the map with 4 or 5 surviving players. This is where the game gets incredibly tense and you can feel yourself shaking. Here, it's all about holding your nerve and putting yourself in situations where you won't be jumped on from unfavourable angles. Winning in PUBG has to be the one of the most gratifying experiences I've ever had in a video game. I laughed for 5 minutes straight after my first and only game in 30 hours of play time. I've always went back in for more, no matter how badly I got wrecked.

Battlegrounds is massively popular for the right reasons. The title is still in Early Access, though. You will need a beefy PC and a very good internet connection in order to enjoy it fully. We got an average of 70-80 fps in the game at ultra settings and 1080p resolution with random drops to 40.

Our testbed configuration:

Processor: Core i7 6700K
clocked at 4.00 Ghz

Graphics Card: Gigabyte G1 GeForce GTX 1070, 8 GB GDDR5

Memory: 16 GB DDR4 at 2400 MHz

Game not installed on SSD

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