Civilization V – How This is Going to Work

Greetings, historians. As we get ready to launch our *Civilization V* unit, it's important for us all to be on the same page about why we are using this game as a learning tool, how our classroom sessions with the game are going to work, and what your scholarly responsibilities will be.

Objectives

After our work with this game, you will be able to clearly communicate:

1. The "cause and effect" of the actions of your civilization, the advancement of your technologies and knowledge, and your relations with other civilizations.

2. Your civilization's particular "path to success" (or failure) based on the decisions your group made and the strategies your group used during the course of the game.

3. An understanding of the complexities of the balance of trade, military strength, knowledge and civics required in managing a thriving society.

4. How your individual communication and group work skills impacted your group.

While the game is a ton of fun, and hopefully that sense of fun will transfer into our work in class, it is also based in solid historical research, and our main purpose here is to learn about the complexities governing the emergence and sustainability of a civilization. Game play is a tool through which we will gain a deep and thorough understanding of our year-long inquiry question, "Is our civilization on the rise or the fall?" Hopefully, as we go along, you will be able to develop your own definition of what a civilization is, and you will notice the factors that contributed to your group's (and other groups') shift from unstructured collective to civilization, and what the factors were that led to your fall, if indeed your civilization does fall.

A shorter way of saying the above is, Don't get so carried away with the game that you forget to pay attention to the above learning outcomes.

Responsibilities

Before we start, your group will need to decide which member will take on which role, keeping in mind that these roles can change hands as we go along, so long as that change is done purposefully and with the agreement of all involved.

Chief Strategist   Your job is to keep an eye on your end-game. How are you planning on winning the game? Are you going for a technological, diplomatic, or cultural victory? What technologies, wonders, buildings, resources, and units do you need to cultivate to achieve this goal? Does your strategy need to shift in response to what other civilizations are doing? With these things in mind, work with your group to achieve consensus (agreement) about what actions you take each turn. You should work carefully with your group's Professor of History, watching what actions other teams make and what effect those actions have on the world, in order to determine what actions your group will take in response.

Data Control   Your job is to have a thorough understanding of how this game works, based on a careful and thorough reading of the manual (and other resources, if you so wish). If your group has questions about game play, they can rely on you to have accurate answers. During game play, your job is to make notes about what actions your team has decided to make each turn, and then come to the main console and enter those actions into the computer. To this end, you need to have a strong understanding of how the game-play system works and what buttons and tabs do what.

Archivist   Your job is to keep a neat and organized copy of the log of your group's actions and what the effect of those actions was, in collaboration with your group's Professor of History. This job is extremely important, as it will give group members the information they need to complete scholarly tasks.

Professor of History   Your job is to carefully observe the immediate and the long-term effects of each action your group makes, and then work with the Archivist to make note of those effects in your group's observation log. You will also need to observe and make notes of other groups' actions and their immediate and potential long-term impacts, as these may influence your civilization's decision-making and planning processes. Your observations will be of vital use to the Chief Strategist and to your group's overall success.

You may change roles during the course of this unit, but you need to let me know **before** you do so.

Game-play

At the beginning of each game-play block, groups will have a few minutes to review their logs from previous sessions and then plot their course of actions for the day. Depending on how we manage transitions, each group will hopefully have several turns during each game-play block.

At the beginning of each game-play session, remind yourself:

- What are the responsibilities of your role?

- What is your goal for group work with this project? What do you need to do today in order to get closer to achieving that goal?

While groups are planning their actions, your group is free to talk, remembering that you probably don't want other groups to hear what you are planning. This means you need to regulate your voices.

When a group's Data Control comes up to enter in that group's actions, talk will need to stop. How we manage this will determine if we can actually continue to use this game as a learning tool. It will also determine how many rounds we get through each day. It is important that you give each group's Professor of History (as well as yourself) the space they will need to carefully monitor the effects of each group's actions.

There will be a brief period of planning between each group's entry of actions.

Depending on time, we may not always be able to be fair about giving every team the same number of turns each session. If this occurs, we will try to pick up where we left off, starting with the group or groups that did not receive equal game-play in the previous session.

We will do periodic group assessment, in which you will assess yourself and your teammates on how you worked as a team, and how you performed your individual roles.

We will also do periodic reflections, in which you will write or draw or talk about how you are doing in relation to group work; and there will be written reflections about the "cause and effect" of decisions your group made—your groups logs will be important tools to this end.

Your performance and development as a group member will make up a large part of your assessment in Career Education.

Other Responsibilities

During the course of this unit, we will also engage in mini-projects related to the civilization your group is playing. You will be provided with short project outlines for each activity.

Leaders

Based on the questions your group generated about the leader of your civilization, your group will briefly share your findings with the class. Each group member will be responsible for sharing their findings. Think 1-2 minutes tops per person. This is a quick research project.

Cause and Effect

A few times over the course of the term, you will be asked to reflect upon the most impactful action your group made during a particular session. What was the action? Why was it made? What was the effect of this action? What might the long-term effect of this action be?

Timeline

After we complete the game – or at some point after civilizations have developed, if we decide to continue game-play past this term – your group will be responsible for creating a timeline of the important actions your group made, and the discoveries and advancements made by your civilization, wars started and ended, wonders built, and great people generated. To this end, record keeping of actions and dates will be of extreme importance.