



# How to Play Teaching Guides: #29 Through the Ages

This guide is intended for use by owners of the game looking for a quick outline with a recommended order and structure with which to teach the game. To hear a sample explanation or to learn the game yourself listen to episode #29 of The How to Play Podcast available at [www.howtoplaypodcast.com](http://www.howtoplaypodcast.com)

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## The Hook - What the Game is About

*"Welcome to Through the Ages. In this game you be guiding a civilization through The Middle Ages, The Age of Exploration and Modern Times. The goal of the game is to be the most culturally significant civilization of all time, represented by having the most culture points at the end of the game.*

*Though culture points are the object of the game it is but one important aspect of all many elements critical in building a successful civilization. You will be faced with many pressures in order to stay competitive with your rivals. Success in this game requires you to constantly improve all aspects of your civilization. You will need to increase your population and increase your food and ore production. You will want to develop new technologies to more efficiently produce food and ore. You will want to improve your governmental system in order to obtain more actions each turn and of course you will have to continue to keep pace in your military strength or the rival civilizations will quickly take advantage of your weakness.*

*In the midst of doing all these things you need to find a way to score culture points. Some of the most common ways to earn culture points are to devote some of your precious ore resources to building wonders or to allow a portion of your population to devote themselves to the arts or religion. Each turn many of the wonders when completed as well as your employed artists and priests will earn you precious culture points.*

*Though if you devote too much time and resources to earning culture points at any one time you will ultimately fall behind in the game, either by having too slow of production or obsolete technology or military and the other players will soon pass you by or crush you underneath their boots. The player who best manages this balance between constantly improving your civilization while simultaneously finding ways to score the most culture points will win the game."*

(Recommendation: For playing games with new players it is suggested that you start with the "Simple Game" described in the rules. Playing just the first age and without some of the elements including the Military Deck. This will help familiarize players with the basic mechanics of the game and make future games much more enjoyable. Explain to your players that this learning game will just play the first 1/3 of the game and that they should not be as concerned with winning so much as learning the basic mechanics and the different types of cards and how they work. This guide is divided into parts to accomodate this.)

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# The Meat - How to play your first game

## Your Starting Civilization

1. What are Yellow Markers and how are they used? -
  - 1.1 The Worker Pool - available workers, get them from your worker pool by increasing your population by paying food
  - 1.2 Pay ore to build a “building” and give the worker a job
  - 1.3 Yellow Marker on card is a worker AND a “building”
  - 1.4 Example: Yellow Marker on the “lab” is scientist in a lab
  - 1.5 Start with 2 farms, 2 mines, a lab and a warrior
  - 1.6 Cards will refer to “buildings” yellow tokens on played cards
  - 1.7 Urban buildings vs Rural buildings.
2. What are Blue Markers and how are they used?
  - 2.1 Blue tokens represent either food or ore
  - 2.2 Production at end of turn for each Yellow Marker on farm/mine
  - 2.3 To start you will produce 2 food and 2 ore each turn
  - 2.4 You will spend these tokens and they will go back to the bank
3. What are these White Markers and how are they used?
  - 3.1 Four main Actions, “civil” actions each turn, (possible to earn more)
  - 3.2 Show use of them by moving them off the card
  - 3.3 Most Common uses of civil actions - Increasing Population, Giving a worker a Job, Picking up Cards, Playing Cards
  - 3.4 Red markers are “military” actions and will be discussed later
4. What are all these crazy tracks on the Game Board?
  - 4.1 The Card Row - Cards available for players to take
    - 4.1.1 Costs in actions to pick up that card
    - 4.1.2 After each turn cards are removed, slides left, the game timer
  - 4.2 Culture, Science and Strength Ratings - Dictated by Yellow Markers in buildings, wonders, military units and techs (strength is constant)
  - 4.3 Accumulated Culture Track - Scoreboard for the game
  - 4.4 Accumulated Science Track - used for playing many of the cards
5. Review goal of the game and uses of the yellow, blue and white markers

## **The Basics of a Turn**

1. On your turn you choose four actions using the white markers.
  - 1.1 Increase Population - Pay Food and move yellow marker to Pool
  - 1.2 Give a Worker a Job - Pay Ore (Use Red Markers for Warriors)
  - 1.3 Take a Card for 1,2 or 3 actions
  - 1.4 Play a Card from your hand and pay the cost
  - 1.5 More types of actions will be discussed when we look at the cards
2. Typical early turn - Build Mine, Increase population, Take 2 cards
3. Production
  - 3.1 Produce; Culture, Science, Food (consume) and Ore (corruption)
  - 3.2 Discuss Consumption and Corruption (No Corrupt. in 1st Game)

## **The Different Types of Civil Cards**

1. Technology Cards - Red, Grey, Brown, Orange and Blue (light bulbs)
  - 1.1 Better Farms, Mines, Buildings and Military (Brown, Grey & Red)
    - 1.1.1 Place on top of others of same type Bronze-Iron (Mines)
    - 1.1.2 How to Upgrade from Bronze to Iron
    - 1.1.3 Other Examples, Warriors-Swordsmen, Philosophy-Alchemy
    - 1.1.4 New types will appear; libraries, theatres and arenas
  - 1.2 Orange Government Cards - More Actions and Urban Buildings
  - 1.3 Blue Special Technologies - actions, military strength, discounts
2. Green Leaders - One Per Age, grant you a special ability
3. Yellow Actions - One time use ability, cannot play on turn drawn
4. Purple Wonders - put directly into play, require 2-5 donations to be built, each batch requires an action, only build one at a time, successive wonders cost extra actions to draw from card row

## **Flow of the Learning Game**

1. First Turn - Simply choose cards = player # and produce
2. Standard Turns; Card Row, Take Actions, Produce
3. Third Turn and on Start Player Reveals an “event” each turn
4. Continue taking turns until Civil Deck I is completed to end the game.

## The Military Actions and Military Cards

1. What are these Red Markers for?
  - 1.1 Military Actions can be used for making workers into military units
  - 1.2 Each leftover military action allow you to draw a Military Card
  - 1.3 Military Cards are drawn at end of each turn
  - 1.4 Military Cards played during a new first step of the turn
2. What do you do during the “Political Action” Step?
  - 2.1 After Card Row is set but before any civil Actions (Action Phase)
  - 2.2 Second Turn you will draw Military Cards
  - 2.3 Third Turn you may play ONE Card of four types or pass
3. Playing a Future Green Event or Territory Card - Triggers an Event
  - 3.1 Score Culture Points = Age play in future events deck
  - 3.2 Resolve the Top Card of the Current Events, Give Examples
  - 3.3 When Current Events are Exhausted replace with “Future Events”
  - 3.4 How to Resolve a Colony Bid - Players Bid Military Units
4. Play a Brown Aggression Card
  - 4.1 Attacker pays red actions, may sacrifice and announces strength
  - 4.2 Defender must match strength to cancel through sacrifices/cards
  - 4.3 Use Bonus Military cards to defend or add to Colony Bids
  - 4.4 Review Difference between Colony Bids and Aggression Attacks
5. Play or Cancel a Blue Pact Card
  - 5.1 Propose Agreement with another player for cooperation
6. Play a Black War Card - (not used in “Advanced Game”)
  - 6.1 Declaration to steal something based on strength difference
  - 6.2 Resolved on the following turn, may sacrifice but no bonus cards
7. Review Six Options for Political Phase; 4 card types, cancel pact or pass
8. Playing Red Tactics Cards (used as a red action during action phase)
  - 8.1 Gives bonuses for certain combinations of units
  - 8.2 Only one at a time, but can get bonus multiple times



## Just a few more important rules

1. Happiness
  - 1.1 Must equal empty population areas or “Uprising” (no production)
  - 1.2 Free workers can become “discontent workers” to allow production
2. End of an Age - Last civil card added to row triggers end of Age
  - 2.1 Obsolescence: At End of Age I, discard A cards, played leaders, incomplete wonders, pacts. End of Age II: Ditch Age I cards etc.
  - 2.2 Cards in play, (except leaders and pacts) remain in play.
  - 2.3 Age IV: Play until players all had one turn in Age IV
3. Discuss Age III “Impact of” Event Cards that score Victory Points
  - 3.1 Major chunk of victory points come from Age III event cards
  - 3.2 Age III event cards give players CP’s for having certain things
  - 3.3 In “Advanced Game” 4 are revealed at beginning of the game
  - 3.4 In “Full Game” players may choose which get used through playing these bonus cards to event deck as they appear in Age III
  - 3.5 At end of game all played event cards are revealed and scored
4. End of Game: Add Bonus culture points for event cards and the most culture points wins! (Also look at CP’s available from Age III Wonders)

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## The Hamster - How to Win the Game

1. Shoot for continuous steady growth in the areas of Ore and Food Production, Available Actions, Military, Science and Culture Points.
  - 1.1 Ore and Food Production - Getting better mines/farms
  - 1.2 Many routes to get more actions - govt., blue cards, wonders, leaders
  - 1.3 You will be **SEVERELY PUNISHED** if your military grows weak
  - 1.4 You will not be able to advance your civ. without Science
  - 1.5 You cannot fall too far behind in Culture throughout the game
2. Try to avoid getting involved in too many projects, wasted actions can be a result of trying to do too much at once.
3. Remember that the goal of the game is to score Culture Points, figure out when to shift your focus to scoring culture late in the game.

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**Footnotes - All those darn little rules**

1. Setups for different player numbers, (# events, pacts, cards removed)
2. A Civil cards go away after each refill
3. The Destroy Action - used to move around workers
4. Technologies - Any card that costs lightbulbs is a technology
5. Leaders - May only draw one of each age
6. Wonders - Must pay extra actions, go into play, ties up blue tokens
7. Drawing Military Cards - Max of Three drawn per turn from extra Military Actions
8. Dont forget to swap out Military Cards at the end of the Age
9. Hand Limits - based on # of actions: Civil Hand Limit - May not draw more cards, Military Hand Limit - Discard at end of Political Phase
10. Blue Special Technologies - Only one at a time of each symbol
11. Worker Pool - No limit
12. Hunger Penalty - Very unlikely as production occurs first
13. Urban building limit - restricted by government
14. Revolutions - Change govt. by spending ALL civil actions in a turn
15. Peaceful Change of Govt. - One civil action and more science points
16. "Levels of Buildings" - A=0, 1=1. Look at yellow markers to count how many "levels" of buildings you have. Give examples
17. Resolving Tied Green Events - In favor of start player, inc. end of game
18. Must have more strength to play a brown Aggression card
19. Colony bid - Only bid what you can pay must sacrifice at least one unit
20. Colony Cards - Look at one time bonuses and perm. bonuses, keep card (it can be lost )
21. Air Force Units - Add 1 to any army to double tactics bonus
22. Antiquated Units - Use parentheses number if 2 ages from tactic
23. Obsolescence - Things Obsolete not from that age but from the previous age
24. Full Game only rule - After each age remove two yellow tokens from your yellow marker pool
25. Last Turn - No Sacrificing of Units for Agressions or Wars
26. Review 7 steps of Production, sci-cult-food-cons-ore-corr-cards.
27. Speeding up the game - Production as next player plays their turn

**Credits:**

Game Design: Vlaada Chvatil      Game Publisher: CBG, Eagle Games

Outline Author: Ryan Sturm ©2011

Teaching outline based upon How to Play Podcast Episode #29

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