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Purpose and Overview

Purpose

The Activators contained in this book are intended to supplement World History classes by allowing students to experience and understand some of the most daunting challenges faced in the creation of civilization. The six Activators are presented as problems that ancient peoples had to overcome to be able to create civilization. These problems can be briefly summarized as:

1. The need for a stable source of food that can generate a surplus.
2. The need for cooperation to control the flooding of rivers.
3. The need to be able to accurately record food supplied to the civilization.
4. The need for non-verbal communication in civilization.
5. The need to make the people of a civilization feel an attachment to it.
6. The need to be able to introduce new ways of thinking and doing things into the civilization.

The “problems” approach to dealing with the emergence of civilization forms a coherent and strong unifying theme that connects all six activators together. These six activators, actually 1-2 day simulations, tell one tale, the story of what obstacles needed to be overcome for civilization to take root. Each Activator deals with one of the problems listed above and places the students in a situation to experience their solution. These simulations are inter-related and provide a strong foundation for the further study of World History.

A good simulation does two things. First, it allows students to experience concepts that the teacher wants them to learn. Upon completing an activity, the student should be able to explain the concept based on that experience. Second, the simulation should be so engaging that it makes a lasting impression on the students.



What are Activators?

These Activators are one or two day simulations that allow students to actively experience central concepts leading to the formation of civilization. Upon completing the activities, students should be able to explain these concepts based on what they have just experienced. These Activators so engage the students that the concepts that emerge from the lessons enters into their long-term memory.

The Activators require very little background information. They serve to provide an experiential background that gives your students a foundation to understand the information and concepts necessary to learn about the birth of civilization.

The Activators were designed to totally immerse students in the activity. Regardless of whether they are of advanced, average, low ability or limited English fluency, all students will be able to participate and gain from their use.

Learning Styles

Activators allow your students to participate in each lesson using a wide variety of learning styles. The students will have ample opportunity to deal with visual-spatial, kinesthetic, interpersonal, interpersonal, linguistic, auditory and logical modes of learning throughout these six Activators. Multiple learning modes are required for each lesson. Incorporating various learning styles is a powerful way to motivate students and account for individual differences within the classroom. Given the right circumstances and environment, all children can learn. These Activators are intended to help make that possible. Students bring diverse capabilities and strengths to the classroom that often are not allowed to shine in traditional classroom settings. One of the true joys of teaching is seeing a student surprise his/her fellow students with his/her hidden talents; and even greater joy is when you see them surprise themselves. The Activators give them a chance to do that.

Grouping Students

The six Activators provide an immersion experience for your students. As a result, traditional cooperative group roles are not necessary. Whether they are hunting and gathering, building levees and channels or constructing temples, the lesson and the time frame will structure their activities. Part of the intention of these Activators is for the students to work out for themselves how they will complete the task. This is part of the theme of problem solving. While this is not the usual model for cooperative group activities, the highly engaging and participatory nature of the Activators make it the preferred method.

Set-Up

The Activators are meant to be highly engaging for the students. Most require a high degree of mobility and some will require that you will have to rearrange your classroom to accommodate this. Some will also require that you provide some materials such as marbles (Activator 2), butcher or poster paper (Activator 4) and materials such as tape and paper-clips (Activators 2 & 5). Activators 1-5 are all done in one class period while Activator 6 requires two periods. Some of the Activators will require handouts for the students (Activators 1, 3, and 6) while some will not (Activators 2, 4, and 5). Some will require your direct participation throughout the lesson (Activators 3 and 4) while others will allow the teacher to turn the students loose after directions while then monitoring their activities (Activators 1, 2, 5, & 6).

Debriefing

It is important that each Activator be debriefed at its conclusion. If this cannot be done at the end of the period then it should occur during the next class period. During the debriefings it is important to have the students describe their own experiences of what occurred during the Activator. Prior to this, you may want to have students write a brief summary of what happened during the Activator. From these experiences the teacher will explain how it relates to a problem that had to be solved to make civilization possible. The emphasis should be on the problem and its solution. Since the students experienced both, allow them to address the solution. Each Activator contains a series of questions that may be helpful during the debriefing.

Evaluation

One way to evaluate the students is to have the students write an essay describing the experience they had while participating in the Activator. In this essay they will identify the central problem within the Activator and its solution. Writing prompts are provided at the end of each Activator.

A Problem Approach Theme to the Activators

For over two million years human beings lived a nomadic life in which very little progress was made to alleviate the meagerness and insecurity of their existence. Human energy was entirely consumed in the daily effort to survive, especially in the hunting and gathering of food. Then, about 5,000 years ago, all of that suddenly changed. Cities were started on the banks of great rivers and civilization emerged. Within 5000 years the human energies released by civilization led to mankind landing on the moon. This rapid transformation of the conditions and outcome of human life is truly astounding!

These Activators help to tell the story about how this transformation was made possible. They do so by presenting problems that had to have solutions before civilization could take root as the revolutionary and dominant form of human organization.

Activator 1, Hunting and Gathering versus Farming: The Agricultural Revolution, identifies the contrast of methods of securing food between nomadic hunter-gatherers and farmers. Students learn that farming was a vastly more productive way of securing food and was able to generate food surpluses needed to support civilization.

Activator 2, Controlling the Flooding of Rivers: The Birth of Government, takes students to the banks of the great river valleys where farming began. Here they will learn that rivers created the soil that made farming possible. But they will also discover that the destructive force of rivers could threaten that farming. Students will learn that the problem of controlling the flooding of great rivers and diverting its potentially destructive force to productive ends was one that early farmers had to confront. They will understand that this problem was solved through extensive organization and cooperation that gave rise to the first organized governments in history.

In **Activator 3, Counting the Grain Harvest: The Birth of Writing**, the lessons of Activators 1 and 2 will be reinforced as students learn the first cities were dependent on surpluses of food created by farming. They will see that one of the primary jobs of organized governments was to collect and store food to feed the inhabitants of the city. This task was essential to the survival of the city and relied on a need for extremely accurate record keeping. Students will observe that the problem facing the city was record keeping by mere memory was not precise enough and a tool needed to be developed that would allow for an accurate count. They will learn that writing was that tool.

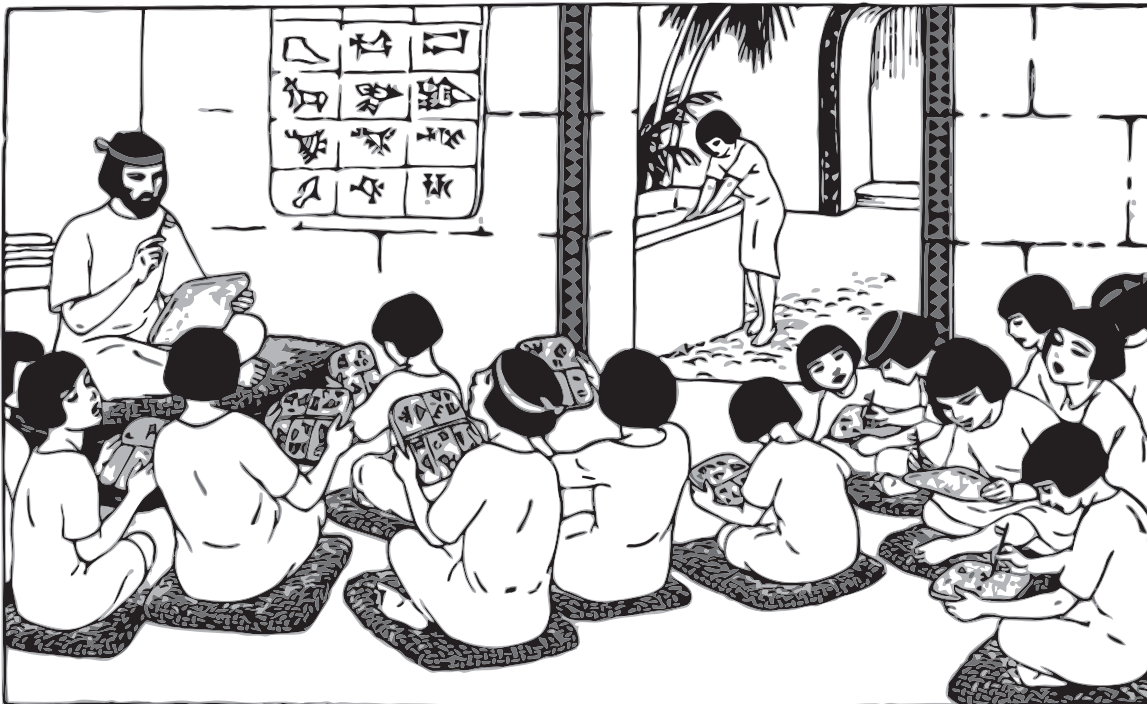
Activator 4, City of Strangers: The Need for Written Laws, reinforces and extends the lessons of Activator 3. In this Activator, students will learn that life in the city created a new problem that was not experienced by nomadic and farming communities. Cities, the heart of civilization, had populations in the many thousands. For the first time in human history people living in the same society personally knew or had contact with only a small percentage of people in that society. Virtually all the inhabitants of the new city had no contact with the cities' rulers at all. This led to a communication problem. The much smaller nomadic and farming communities could rely exclusively on verbal communication and unwritten customs to regulate their lives. This would not be enough in the changed circumstances of the city. In this Activator the students will learn that indirect communication was needed and that it was used to turn verbal custom into written law.

Activator 5, Making an Impression: The Power of Ancient Architecture, extends the lessons of Activator 4 in demonstrating the changed circumstances that people were experiencing living in cities. The close personal ties that created a strong attachment for the individual to his society disappeared in the new cities. Life in cities was much more impersonal than any previous form of human organization. Yet all societies need their

members to form strong bonds of attachments to it. The problem for the new cities was to find new ways to establish these new forms of attachment. After experiencing the Activator, the students will see that the majestic and imposing architecture of temples and palaces within the city walls was one of the ways in which ancient cities sought to forge those new attachments.

In **Activator 6, The Need to Introduce the New: Cultural Diffusion**, the students will learn that cities and civilization must be open to new information and ways of doing things to survive and grow. But ancient civilizations were extremely authoritarian and little inclined to think about or do new things. For civilizations to grow and prosper there had to be a way to let new ideas and ways of doing things filter into the city. While experiencing this Activator the students will learn that it was through the process of interaction with other civilizations that this problem was mainly solved through the process of "cultural diffusion."

By presenting each of these Activators as problems to students, a coherent and powerful theme will be established that will continue to reinforce the lessons of the previous Activators. Although divided into six different Activators, they in fact tell one story. That story, the solutions to problems that led to the emergence of civilization, is a fascinating one that is well worth telling.



● Activator 1 ●

Hunting and Gathering versus Farming: The Agricultural Revolution

Overview

Each of the Activators is intended to pose problems that ancient peoples had to overcome in their efforts to establish civilization. By participating in the Activator the students will realize what the solutions to those problems were. Each overview will present the problem and the solution that the Activator is designed to solve.

Problem: For 2.5 million years, humans lived nomadic lives of hunters and gatherers. This era of human existence was one of continual scarcity. All human energy had to be devoted to daily securing the food necessary to survival. All members of the hunting and gathering community had to be involved in this all-consuming task. Under these conditions, human civilization could not emerge. Before civilization could be created, human beings had to discover a way to secure food in a way that would not require all of their energy. Only on this foundation could civilization be started.

Solution: Farming solved the food problem for human beings and created the conditions necessary for the birth of civilization. The Agricultural Revolution changed the face of humanity. Because farming was vastly superior to hunting and gathering as a way to acquire food, humans could establish roots for the first time. The surplus created by farming allowed the population to grow and made it possible for some people to follow pursuits other than producing food. This excess population that could specialize in non-food producing activities gathered in a new form of human organization known as the city. It was in these cities that civilization emerged.

Summary: In this simulation you want your students to understand how farming revolutionized human life and created the conditions for the emergence of civilization.

You will explain to the students that for most of human existence, people engaged in a desperate struggle each day to secure enough food to survive. To do this, they had to hunt for food and vegetation that would provide for a meal for that day. They had to be constantly on the move, following the animals they hunted and new areas to find edible vegetation and fruits. As a result of their nomadic life, they could only have the barest of material possessions.

Hunter and gather tribes had to be very small (usually bands of 20–30) people. Their way of life could not support an excess population. Because of their constant need to secure food, hunters and gatherers could not devote any energy in any other pursuit. They lived a life of scarcity and want. This

way of life continued virtually unchanged for over two million years. Then, in fertile river valleys, human beings learned how to sow seed and tame animals. They learned how to farm. Farming changed every aspect of human life. It was vastly superior to hunting and gathering as a means for securing food. Farming was so successful that humans were able to produce a surplus of food. For the first time in human history people produced enough food to take care of not only today but tomorrow also. Because so much more food could now be secured, the population exploded. Farming's success made it possible for some of those people to direct their energies to things other than securing food. Some could become artisans, creating the possessions that people could now enjoy because they had given up their nomadic lives and stayed in one place. Some of the population could be priests or scribes. Others could learn how to build great architectural structures or serve in a military meant to protect the people of the civilization. The success of farming meant that there would be enough food to support this new specialization in jobs. For the first time, human energy could release itself to activities beyond securing food. This energy was focused in a new type of human organization known as a city. In the cities, people followed the pursuits that created civilization. This was made possible by the incredible productivity of farming. For over 2 million years, human life experienced minimal progress. Within 10,000 years from the creation of the first farms the energy released by solving the food problem led to humans landing on the moon.

In this activator your students will powerfully experience the vast superiority of farming to hunting and gathering and how it created the conditions which allowed the creation of civilization.



Setup Directions

1. Duplications

Duplicate the following in the quantities indicated in *Italics*:

- Background Essay—*one for each student*
- Card Sheet—*cut-out the 80 cards*
- Hunting and Gathering Sheet—*one for each student who is in one of the Hunting and Gathering groups*
- Hunting and Gathering Question and Answer Sheet #1–5—*one for each of the Hunting and Gathering Tribes (groups)*
- Hunting and Gathering Question and Answer Sheet #6–10—*one for each of the Hunting and Gathering Tribes (groups)*
- Hunting and Gathering Question and Answer Sheet #11–15—*one for each of the Hunting and Gathering Tribes (groups)*
- Hunting and Gathering Question and Answer Sheet #16–20—*one for each of the Hunting and Gathering Tribes (groups)*
- Farming Group Question Sheet—*one copy for the one Farming group in the class. Cut along dotted lines (after every five questions) to create 12 sheets (of five questions)*

2. Procedures

- A. Cut out cards from the Card Sheet.** Make one copy of each of the sheets for the **Card Sheet**. Cut these sheets along the lines to create individual cards. When completed, 80 cards will be created. Each of the 80 cards has a number (1–20) on it and a letter (A, B, C, or D). Four cards together that share the same number make up a question. Each question is numbered and has an A, B, C, or D card. The first card (A) contains the first part of the question. The second card (B) contains the second part of the question; the third card (C) contains the final part of the question. The fourth card (D) gives the paragraph number on the **Background Essay** where the answer to the question can be found. Using number #1 from the **Card Sheet** as an example, the first three cards (1A, 1B, and 1C) together form the question “How did members of different civilizations come into contact with one another?” Card D directs the students attention to which paragraph from the **Background Essay** contains the information which will allow them to answer the question. See example below:

1A How did members	1B of different civilizations come into	1C contact with one another?	1D paragraph 20
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Teacher Option—You may prefer to use your text to provide the information rather than the **Background Essay**. If this is the case, you will create the 20 questions and the 80 cards made from those questions yourself. The D card would then list a page number instead of a paragraph number.

- B. Place the cards throughout the room.** Take 80 cards that have been cutout from the **Card Sheet** and tape each card individually throughout the classroom. This is to be done prior to the students entering class. Place the cards all over the room (on walls, bookshelves, desks, the ceiling, etc.). The purpose of the cards is for the students to “hunt” and “gather” the clues found throughout the room.
- C. Create Hunting and Gathering Tribes.** The students will be placed in groups of four or five. These will be called “tribes.”
- D. D. Explain the Hunting and Gathering Cards taped throughout the room.** Pass out **Background Essay** to the groups so that each student has one. Do not have the students read the **Background Essay** prior to the activity. They will use it to help them answer questions during the activity.

After putting the students into their tribes, point out the 80 cards that are taped throughout the room (students will probably point them out beforehand). Inform the students that the 80 cards are 20 questions created from the **Background Essay** (or page numbers in text if you prefer to create your own cards.) Explain to the students that there are 80 cards and that they form 20 questions. Tell them that each question is divided into four parts. Instruct them that each part is found on a separate card. Explain to the students that each card that is part of the same question will share the same number (#1–20). Explain that the **A Card** is the first part of the question, the **B Card** is the second part of the question, and that the **C Card** is the third part of the question. Then explain to them that the **D Card** indicates the paragraph where they will find the information to answer the question.

- E. Pass out and explain the Hunting and Gathering Sheets.** Pass out the **Hunting and Gathering Sheet** to the tribes so that each student gets one. Instruct the students that they will copy the clues that they find on the cards throughout the room onto their **Hunting and Gathering Sheet**. Go over the **Hunting and Gathering Sheet** with the students. Point out to them that the sheet has four columns, labeled A, B, C, and D. The **Hunting and Gathering Sheet** also has



Teaching tip

Make sure that each card is in plain view. Tell the students that they may have to change positions to see a card but that they do not have to touch or move anything! You do not want the students to get into drawers or move materials.

Activator 1

20 rows numbered #1-20. Remind them that each number and its A, B, C, and D cards create a question. Instruct the students that they will travel around the room and “hunt and gather” clues that they will copy onto their **Hunting and Gathering Sheet**. Give the example of a student finding the Card 1 Clue C. Show the students how they would write the clue down on their sheet on the row for Card 1 under the column for C. See example below:

Hunting and Gathering Sheet
Activator 1
Master

Hunting and Gathering Sheet

Card Number	A Clue	B Clue	C Clue	D Clue
1.			contact with one another?	
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				
16.				
17.				
18.				
19.				
20.				

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As they begin to gather more clues from the cards, their individual **Hunting and Gathering Sheets** will begin to look like the following:

Hunting and Gathering Sheet
Activator 1
Master

Hunting and Gathering Sheet

Card Number	A Clue	B Clue	C Clue	D Clue
1.			contact with one another?	
2.	This word means			
3.				Paragraph 7
4.				
5.	How did leaders of ancient		Obedience of the city's population?	
6.				
7.		went into the construction of magnificent		
8.			in jobs in cities?	Paragraph 12
9.				
10.				
11.	Why did the governments	of cities tax the		Paragraph 17
12.				Paragraph 10
13.				
14.		learn how to plant		
15.		tribe size of	Paleolithic people?	
16.				
17.	What is the transition			Paragraph 9
18.				
19.			different people through contact called?	
20.				

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Instruct the students that their goal will be to gather as much information from the cards as they can and then transfer the information on the card onto the designated spot on their **Hunting and Gathering Sheet**. Give each tribe a minute to check for understanding among themselves; then ask for any questions they may still have.

Activator 1

Teaching tip

Stress to the students that it is vitally important for the tribes to be able to feed each member in the time allotted.



F. Pass out and explain the Hunting and Gathering Tribal Question and Answer Sheets. Tell the students that the ultimate goal of their tribe is to put together as many questions as they can and to find the answer to those questions in the **Background Essay**. Each completed question with its answer will count as enough food to feed one member of their tribe. Not being able to create enough questions and answers in their tribe will lead to starvation and possible extinction. Encourage the tribes to try to get a surplus (more questions and answers than the number of people in their tribe).

Pass out the **Hunting and Gathering Tribal Question and Answer Sheets** to each tribe. Every **Hunting and Gathering Tribal Question and Answer Sheet** has been cut in half beforehand so there are four sheets total. Each group will receive **Hunting and Gathering Tribal Question and Answer Sheets #1-5, #6-10, #11-15, and #16-20**. Each tribe gets one set of the four sheets.

Tell the students that the four **Hunting and Gathering Tribal Question and Answer Sheets** are to remain in their tribe. Stress that they may not carry them with them as they “hunt” and “gather” throughout the room. These sheets are to remain in the group and will be used to determine how successful the tribe was in its task. Each sheet has five of the 20 question numbers plus spots to write the answer. See example below:

Hunting and Gathering Tribal Question and Answer Sheet #1-5				
Card 1				
Card 2				
Card 3				
Card 4				
Card 5				
Answer Card 1:				
Answer Card 2:				
Answer Card 3:				
Answer Card 4:				
Answer Card 5:				