

WoundedKnight's Strategy Guide (Revised)

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Table of Contents	Page
Learn the Rules	2
Civilization Selection	2
Leverage Your Strengths	3
Religions	3
City Placement	4
Civics Guide	6
City Improvement	8
Specialization	10
Wonders	12
Great People	13
Chop-Rushing	15
Technology	16
Military Strategy	17
Screenshots	19

LEARN THE RULES

The best-spent two hours for my CIV strategy skills was spent pouring over the civlopedia to understand the rules, the tech trees, improvements, units, etc. It's much easier to do well if you have a clear strategy and know where you want to go. For example, some techs offer bonuses to the first discoverer: a free great person, a free great tech, or starting a religion. Obviously these techs are generally a priority to get first, while others with benefits that are not time-sensitive can wait.

CIVILIZATION SELECTION

The decision as to which civilization to play as is an individual one. Traits have various strengths and weaknesses:

Philosophical: Fabulous at +100% GP, one of my top two favorites (with financial) . Synergistic with the religious civics (Pacifism - +100% GP rate) and the national epic (+100% GP in the city of your choice), as well as mercantilism etc.

Financial: My other favorite. Once you get cottages and watermills working, this will gain you +1 extra gold for almost every being worked in your city radius. This is a huge advantage and allows me to stay at 90-100% tech funding from the middle ages onward even with expensive civics, a large army, and a large empire.

Industrious: A nice trait, as the wonders you get with +50% build speed can duplicate many other civ traits. Half-price forges are great also because they increase your productivity, and for non-industrious civs they are quite expensive. However, the ability of any player to quickly build wonders by "chop-rushing" (described later) undermines some of the value of the industrial trait.

Expansive: Not bad, the health is nice, but I find that happiness is much more limiting than health in the early game, although it may be more useful on very high difficulty levels. Cheap granaries while also nice are of dubious value as granaries don't cost many hammers anyway.

Aggressive: A great trait for the warmonger. While experience can be given by buildings, civics, and wonders, a free extra promotion is great -- especially for barracks-trained units with a couple of levels to boot. More and more experience is required to get more bonuses (2/5/10/17/etc), and so having a free promotion that doesn't set you back at all in the XP quest is good. Since the promotions become more and more powerful the higher in level you go (+20% city attack, +25%, +30% with an extra +10% vs gunpowder units, etc...cumulative!!!), having an extra promotion can result in a huge amount of extra military power, especially if you have planned well to take advantage of other sources of experience. If you want an early domination or conquest victory, aggressive is an excellent choice.

Spiritual: One of the weakest traits IMO. No anarchy, while nice, is of little benefit as I only change civics 5-6 times in a game (I try to change 2 or 3 at a time at times when several important civics are discovered in close time proximity). Cheap temples? Temples are cheap anyway and have fewer benefits than many other buildings.

Creative: +2 culture has significant benefits in the early game, but few in the late game when cities have more culture than they know what to do with. How many times have I conquered a city only to have it flip to a closely adjacent neighbor? How many times have I built cultural improvement (theater, library, etc.) in a conquered city for the exclusive purpose of generating culture (and, sometimes failed), when a creative civ would not have had to worry at all? The automatic expanding cultural radius can be very valuable in expanding in the early game and blocking off large amounts of territory for your later development. While cultural's benefits are mainly in the early game, the benefits can be substantial. I prefer to get industrious instead and build Stonehenge for your early culture (although this expires -- soon -- with calender), the benefit of creative is still significant.

Organized: One of the worst traits, with few exceptions. Only gives a bonus when you have expensive civics,

and most of the good civics have little upkeep anyway. Get financial instead; you will be many times ahead economically. Lighthouse and courthouse are the real benefits of organized IMO, but still weak ones.

My favorite civ is English (Elizabeth) – Philosophical/Financial. Other great picks include Chinese (Qin Shi Huang) – Industrious/Financial and English (Victoria) – Expansive/Financial.

LEVERAGE YOUR STRENGTHS

It's important to make the most out of your advantages by drawing upon the synergy of civ traits, civics, improvements, and buildings and wonders. For example, it would be silly to get the aggressive civ trait and fail to build barracks. Synergy can be very powerful when you combine substantial bonuses in the same area from multiple different sources. Aggressive + barracks + pentagon + theocracy, + West Point and Heroic Epic in same city = megapowerful national military (come to think of it, it is still extremely powerful even *without* the aggressive trait or theology -- there are better traits and civics IMO). Philosophical + Pacifism + National Epic = 300% great people points, with 400% in the city with the national epic. And so forth.

It is also important to try to compensate for your disadvantages. For example, if I am not playing an expansive civ (or even if I am), I try to build cities on rivers as much as possible for the +2 health bonus, even at a slight productivity hit.

RELIGIONS

As in the real world, religion can be one of the most uniting or dividing things in CIV. While gifts or insults have only minor benefit on relations (+/-1, rarely more than +/-2; religion can have a huge impact on relations -- seeing +/-4, +/-6 from religion are common. Religion is by far the biggest factor in relations in most games. It seems to be something in the range of +1 relations for every city of your religion in your opponent's land, +1 or 2 if your religion is their state religion. Therefore, pumping out missionaries to convert your neighbors in the good times is as important for the security of your empire as maintaining a powerful military. I try to keep one city pumping out missionaries of your religion the entire game, providing both relationship and economic bonuses.

Consider getting an early religion (Hinduism or Judaism) or, if going for a chop-rush settler push, one or more of the later ones (Confucianism, Christianity, Taoism, Islam). In any case, try to pick up as many of the later ones as I can in order to keep friends friendly. A friendly neighbor who has previously converted to your religion but subsequently discovers Islam can suddenly decide that you are a pagan who must be cleansed from the earth. Besides some of the techs (like Divine Right, Islam) offer cool wonders.

Founding cities of religion can become real cash cows in the mid and late game, IF you build the religion-specific wonder in the founding city. In a recent game where I aggressively spread Confucianism, over 30 40 cities were converted by the late of the game. I also discovered Taoism and subsequently captured the founding cities of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Judaism, giving me five of the seven world religions. Did I ignore my non-state religions, even though I planned to stick with Confucianism throughout the entire game? Of course not. I sent a great prophet to each city to build the religion-specific wonder. This accomplishes two purposes. First, it gives you free bonus income equal to the number of cities with that religion each turn. Second, it causes the autonomous spread of each religion from its founding city without even requiring missionaries. While I continue to aggressively spread my state religion with missionaries, the other religious capitals function as cash cows with progressively increasing revenue without requiring any other input or management.

Since founding religious cities generate a large amount of income, *regardless of the position of your financial sliders*, these are the best cities for building banks, markets, and grocers. I find that the Wall Street wonder is typically best built in the founding city of my state religion for an extra and substantial economic boost, since this will typically be the largest religion by the mid to late game (and thus the largest city economy).

As previously mentioned, I keep pumping missionaries out from 2–3 cities almost continuously through the entire game. This improves relations with neighbors, creates LOS to other cities, and generates money.

The financial and diplomatic benefits of missionaries are well-known, although the espionage benefits are rarely mentioned. When I am contemplating war with a nation, I will send a wave of missionaries to as many of their key cities as possible before my missionaries cross the border. This accomplishes two things. First, it provides invaluable intelligence information and allows one to assess which cities represent priority acquisitions as well as to get some idea of the strength, location, and composition of enemy armies. Equally importantly, missionaries of your state religion provide an instant cultural benefit to captured cities. After conquering a city that is not your state religion, you might contemplate building a library or theater -- which could take 50+ turns -- in order to expand the borders and to prevent the city from flipping back to an adjacent neighbor with strong cultural boundaries. However, if the city is already your state religion, it will automatically generate +1 culture/turn in addition to a +1 happiness benefit, expanding your borders within 10 turns and making your city much less likely to flip or revolt. The pre-attack missionary wave essentially adds the benefits of the creative trait to non-creative civs, in addition to its income, happiness, and espionage benefits.

CITY PLACEMENT

The placement of cities is always one of the most important strategic decisions for me in the early and mid game. I will gladly place a city at significantly further distance from my capital if it results in acquiring special resources or monopolizing a location that is of prime strategic or production value. Many specialty resources offer benefits for your entire civilization, and so the race to control luxury, health, strategic, and bonus resources is a key factor in city placement. Whenever possible, I build cities on rivers, and try to get at least on special resource (of any kind) within range. Of course this is not always possible (especially on unusual or specialty map types), but if you repeatedly find that you are having trouble making your cities happy and productive or are failing to acquire important resources, perhaps it is time to reevaluate your city placement. Controlling strategic passes or "choke points" with cities is also valuable -- if you can block off your enemies from chunks of unsettled land and then fill it in later, that is a bonus, although the geography doesn't always accommodate this.

Buildings

Some buildings I like to build everywhere, whereas others I build only in specialized cities, or in any city when there is a natural opening. Buildings I like to build as much as possible include:

First Tier

granary

lighthouse (for coastal cities)

library

aqueduct

forge

Second Tier

harbor (if applicable)
temple
theater
market
grocer
factory

The build order of course varies depending on the needs of each city, but generally I get granaries and forges as early as possible everywhere, and theaters first in conquered cities (to prevent culture flipping), and others as the situation dictates. It is hard to go wrong with a library almost everywhere because of the commerce bonus and the culture to expand your borders.

Commerce, Research, and Gold

Squares with or without improvements produce *commerce*. This commerce can then be used to fund research, culture, or turned into gold. Improvements (towns etc) and the financial trait actually give you commerce, not gold.

Then the benefit of city improvements depends on both your base commerce and your sliders. Say you have a small city producing 10 commerce, and your research slider is on 80%, with 20% going into finances. A library (+25% research) will give you an extra 2 beakers (base research = 80% of 10 = 8, 25% of 8 = 2 more). A grocer, however (+25% gold) would seem not to have any benefit to an economy this small (base gold = 20% of 10 = 2, and 25% of 2 = 0.5, rounded down to zero).

Now of course there is some gold *outside* of the commerce system: namely, gold generated by religious buildings. I think that specialist gold also goes directly to finances and is not general "commerce" that can be converted to research.

In other words, the benefit of the improvements depends highly on the position of your sliders. If you played with research on 20% and money on 80%, obviously the financial improvements (market, grocer, bank, etc) would be more valuable. Since in most games however research plays such an important role, science improvements tend to offer greater benefits.

Inflation

Inflation is not covered anywhere in the civilopedia or manual that I can find, but it is an important expense. Inflation can go up but never seems to go down over the course of a game. Inflation increases over time at a steady rate, regardless of spending breakdown. Inflation cannot apparently be controlled; it inevitably increases as the game progresses.

Inflation adds an additional percentage to your expenses, including:
civic upkeep
city maintenance (distance and city number)

This percentage can get quite high. If your expenses are 100 per turn and your inflation is 30%, your final cost is 130 gold. The organized trait has at least some advantage here, because it is saving "pre-tax" rather than "post-tax" dollars. In other words, if your civic upkeep were 50 and inflation were 0%, the organized trait

would save only 25 gold (50% of final upkeep), but if inflation were 40%, your real savings are $50+20$ (40% of 50) = $70/2$, or 35 gold. I still don't think organized is a great trait, but it is something to consider for individuals who like expensive civics.

CIVICS GUIDE

I try to change civics as little as possible since I don't play as Spiritual. I will do 2 or 3 switches at once, when possible. If you do too many changes at once (4 or occasionally 3), it can result in 2 turns anarchy. You cannot change state religion and civics on the same turn.

Government Civics

Hereditary rule: (medium upkeep, + 1 happiness per military unit in a city. Since most cities will have at least one military unit for defense, this tech can be a real benefit in the early middle ages when you are still developing your luxury resource network and constructing happiness buildings.

Representation: low upkeep, +3 research per specialist, +3 happiness in 5 largest cities is a pretty good bonus, especially for a philosophical nation with many specialist. The largest cities are the most likely to get unhappy, so this civic gives you the happiness bonus where you need it.

Police state: high upkeep, +25% military production. -50% war weariness is Great for the warmonger or for wartime defense, but the high cost makes it undesirable in peacetime.

Universal Suffrage: moderate upkeep. The +1 production boost to towns and ability to complete production with gold (units/buildings, not wonders) makes this my preference in the late game; however, it is of little use in the early and mid game when cottages have not yet developed into towns. Don't get snookered into getting this in the early game with the pyramids, as upkeep is high and you will have no towns to provide the productivity bonus.

Legal Civics

Vassalage: high upkeep, +2 experience per unit, lower unit support costs: a good tech for a warmonger, but the high cost makes it prohibitive for others. Consider this temporarily while in a war.

Bureaucracy: +50% production/gold in capital, medium upkeep. Good in the early game, but liberalism is close enough around the corner from civil service that often I hold off for free speech. As the slider is usually set heavily to research, the primary benefit of this civic is usually production rather than gold.

Nationhood: low upkeep, can draft 3 units per turn, barracks +2 happiness. Also a good civic for a warmonger that is better sustainable long-term than vassalage because of its low cost, in addition to adding happiness benefit.

Free Speech: no upkeep, +2 gold from towns, +100% culture per city). It is my favorite for the late game, but won't do you much good if you don't have towns. I like to get bureaucracy for the production boost while towns are developing, and then switch to free speech once I have enough towns to justify it. At no upkeep cost, the price is right, and this one can provide a great boost to your economy.

Labor Civics

Slavery (low upkeep) -- can sacrifice population to finish production. But in the early game while cities are small and slow to grow, before granaries, lighthouses, etc., why would you want to? I haven't found much use for slavery yet as it seems to offer short-term gain at the expense of long-term productivity and growth.

Serfdom (low upkeep) -- workers build improvements faster. I usually have a large enough army of workers building improvements and clearing jungles that this one isn't as attractive as the others.

Caste system (medium upkeep) -- unlimited scientists, artists, merchants in cities. A good choice if you have food to spare, don't yet have enough town improvements to allow specialists otherwise, and can afford the upkeep. Still a good choice for philosophical or great people focused civs.

Emancipation (no upkeep) is great for mid to late game. It doubles rate of cottages -> towns; a big synergistic economic boost when combined with appropriate techs, free speech, and universal suffrage.

Economic Civics:

Mercantilism (medium upkeep) - 1 free specialist per city, no foreign trade routes. Getting this civic is like having the statue of liberty wonder and is a huge boost for philosophical or GP oriented civs. It is moderately expensive, and shuts down foreign trade (which can also hurt, or at least won't help, your relations).

Nonetheless very valuable in synergy.

Free market (low upkeep) - +1 trade route per city. A nice financial or research boost, although only modest in size. However I rarely use this as state property is only a few techs away.

State property (no upkeep) is great (no distance maintenance costs, +1 food from watermills). I find that with my tendency to build many cities, it saves me as much or more than I would earn from the extra trade route, plus upkeep is free, plus you get extra food. As I tend to build watermills along almost all river tiles because of their boost to productivity (+2 with appropriate techs), food (+1), and economy, a river city may be able to support a couple more citizens that can be made specialists to boost your GP generation. My most-used economic tech.

State property eliminates the city distance maintenance cost entirely, which for a large empire typically represents about 50% of your total city upkeep (this rough rule of thumb varies depending on both the number of cities and the distances involved). This can be quite a substantial savings. For a nation with a well-developed state religion, adopting state property frequently allows one to move the tech slider from 70-80% to 90-100%. This faster tech speed has many benefits: quicker availability of new buildings and units, faster tech bonuses, and getting sooner to techs like electricity that increase the value or productivity of your existing city improvements. The extra food can allow you to support extra specialists or larger city growth if you have many river cities and have built watermills. With no civic upkeep cost, the price is right. In most games, the state property civic alone is far better in terms of your financial bottom line than the organized trait, as city distance upkeep costs often well exceed 50% of the civic upkeep costs discounted by organized. My tests suggest that the Versailles wonder, like the Forbidden Palace, reduce only distance upkeep costs (Versailles seems to be like a second Forbidden Palace). If you are using the state property civic and plan to stick with it long-term, don't waste city production on these wonders. Forbidden Palace and Versailles offer only a modest location-dependent decrease in distance costs, while state property abolishes distance costs altogether. With city upkeep virtually cut in half by state property, you will also find less of a necessity for courthouses until your civilization is extremely large.

Once state property becomes available, you have a choice that will be hard if you are a philosophical civ, or easy for most other civs. Mercantilism is such a valuable trait for a philosophical civilization that the decision of whether to keep mercantilism and pay full city distance upkeep plus civic upkeep costs vs. whether to switch to state property is a tough one that requires individual decisions based on your game situation, upkeep costs, and tech rate. If not playing as a philosophical nation, I always grab state property ASAP.

Environmentalism (high upkeep) is nice at the very end of the game when you get ecology (+6 health, +1 happiness from forests and jungles). Unfortunately I've harvested most forests and jungles long before the ecology tech comes around (and jungles are so unproductive why would you want to keep them), and find that my cities already have good health and happiness well before then and are more limited by food. The expensive upkeep is also a drawback, so I tend to use state property more frequently. Rather than getting environmentalism, I prefer to research future techs (+1 health and happiness each for your entire civ), since ecology is already near the end of the tech line), rather than paying the fat environmentalism upkeep fees. At

least that part of environmentalism is realistic.

Religious Civics:

Organized religion (moderate upkeep, +25% building and wonder construction) is great when you are in a building mood and only requires monotheism. Think of this as essentially a forge in every city, excepting of course that the bonus does not apply to unit builds. The +25% is also a big advantage in the wonder race: even if your civ is not industrious, it can make it a lot more competitive. I have verified in-game that organized religion DOES boost wonder speed, which makes it a terrific civic, especially considering how early it is available. This is usually the first civic of the game I adopt.

Theocracy (medium upkeep), +2 experience points for units created in cities with state religion, no non-state religion spread) -- okay for a warmonger, but expensive.

Pacifism (no upkeep, +100% GP) is phenomenal as it can essentially bestow the philosophical trait on a non-philosophical civ, or make philosophical civs even better. Since I like philosophical civs and enjoy having more great people, I frequently employ pacifism. The no upkeep is counterbalanced by the +1 gold per military unit, so this tech can be cheap or expensive depending on your military size.

Free religion (low upkeep): I never get free religion as losing all the state religion bonuses really hurts, as well as losing line of site to all converted cities in other nations. At end-game usually I have plenty of luxuries and am not so desperate for a few more happy faces that I would want to deal with the hassle of having to get 4 or 5 religions in each of my cities to make this civic worthwhile. The +10% tech bonus -- while meaningful -- doesn't seem to make much of a difference for me this late in the game, plus you have to pay fixed upkeep (albeit low) to boot.

Some players attempt to get free religion as soon as possible to pacify aggressive neighbors with different religions. However, I have had war declared on me so many times in the early game when I had no state religion at all that I know that simply removing state religion is no panacea to diplomacy. Dropping a state religion can pacify opponents, but it can also make former close allies lukewarm or even hostile. And if you are still deeply afraid of your neighbors by the late time of game that organized religion becomes available, perhaps it is time to assess your strategy in other areas.

Theology civics include some of the best benefits in the game (+100% GP from pacifism, +25% building and wonder construction speed), and I generally like these bonuses far too much to sacrifice them for free religion, which seems to offer little in return. Nevertheless, if you are in a situation where you are walking on eggshells -- playing deity level with far more powerful AI players, perhaps -- free religion may be something to consider. Otherwise, skip it.

CITY IMPROVEMENTS

I tend to manually control workers (at least until very late in the game) as the computer automation leaves much to be desired and lacks strategic foresight.

Cottages: I build a huge number of cottages -- often more than all other improvements combined. Cottages make up the foundation of economic and research productivity of your civilization. Especially if you have the financial trait, cottages produce great bonuses when they grow into towns, with full techs and civics: commerce +7, production +1. Cottages can be built anywhere, but their production bonus comes late (after full growth into towns) and only with the correct civic.

The downsides of cottages include that they take a long time to grow: cottage->hamlet 10 turns, hamlet ->village 20 turns, village ->town 40 turns. This can be cut in half with appropriate civics, but still it takes 35 turns in the best possible case to grow from a cottage to a town. In a game that lasts only 400 or

500 turns (and may be decided long before then), that is a big chunk of game time. Also, cottages can be easily pillaged by an enemy. Cottages are particularly valuable around your core research cities, but think twice about building cottages on frontier cities close to aggressive neighbors. In any case, the long maturation time of cottages requires that they be built as early as possible to maximize their benefits. Having cottages that have grown into towns while your neighbors are still dealing with hamlets and villages can prove decisive.

Watermill. An immediate +1 production boost, with final bonuses of +1 food, +2 commerce, and +2 production with full techs and civics (requires state property for the food bonus). These are very helpful in increasing the production of plains, grassland, or flood plains adjacent to rivers that have little innate production capability. And once you have the correct techs/civics, the bonuses are immediate and do not require the maturation that cottages do. You can only build watermills on one square or the other to the side of a river, but I build watermills everywhere I can.

Windmill. An immediate +1 food, with final bonuses of +1 food, +2 commerce, and +1 production with full tech (replaceable parts, electricity). Very useful if you need more food, have limited river access, and want something that offers more substantial and well-rounded benefits than farms. Windmills can be placed on hills which makes a nice alternative to mines, giving production and commerce benefits while allowing the square to provide at least some of the food supply required to work it. For these reasons, I am coming to prefer windmills to mines on hill squares, which you might not be able to otherwise work without some extra food.

Farms. +1 food initially, +2 food (total) at end-game when you have biology. The benefits of windmills and watermills are available earlier than biology, so I generally go with those when possible. In most pangaia and continent games with abundant river and grassland, I build few or no farms. However, if your cities are built in less fertile locations -- on plains and mountains and away from rivers, as is the case on some specialty maps (great plains, highlands, etc) or are simply badly positioned, you may find yourself needing to build far more farms.

The danger of farms is that, especially on higher difficulty levels, extra food supply will quickly bring your cities over the happiness and/or healthiness levels they can support, resulting in revolters and no "we love the king day" events. Farms offer no benefits beyond food supply, and I prefer to get food -- when needed -- from improvements like water and windmills that offer other benefits. Farms do have some uses, but automated workers tend to overdo farming. If you do find a need to build farms, be careful that they don't push your cities into unhappiness or unhealthiness.

Lumbermill. Chopping down the trees doesn't add any more food production (unlike C3C), and so lumbermills are a prime consideration for productivity in the late game. That is, in areas where you still have trees. With max +3 production (Base +1 from trees, +1 from lumbermill, +1 more when railroad comes around) and +1 commerce for squares adjacent to rivers, lumbermills are the best late-game productivity improvement. They don't have the economic benefits of cottages, watermills, or windmills, but offer a more substantial production boost without sapping your food supply (unlike workshops) or without requiring a specific civic to keep from doing so. The late benefits of a lumbermill must also be weighed against the benefits of chopping in the early game for benefits that can be quite substantial at a time when your civilization's productivity is very low: chopped trees can result in a much faster start, extra cities, or more wonders. I chop trees in the early game for chop-rushing settlers or crucial wonders, but by the mid-game when instant productivity is no longer urgent, I prefer to preserve any remaining trees for future lumbermills.

Workshop. +1 production, -1 food. With max upgrades they can offer up to +3 production, and with state property, no food penalty. This allows the same +3 production as lumbermill, without requiring you to keep trees around until the late game. The food penalty early on makes this a poor choice in the early middle ages, but once you have state property, workshops represent an excellent improvement for production. However, if

you depend on workshops and state property, you will largely be obliged to stay with that civic through the rest of the game -- or see your cities starve when you change, unless you have a large food surplus from other sources.

Yes, you can have large, productive, growing cities with abundant specialists while building few or no farms -- if properly situated, of course:

{Screenshots Omitted}

However, I don't hesitate to plop in a farm or a windmill (or a few) if cities are stagnating or the geography is poor.

SPECIALIZATION

Since you can only build 2 national wonders in a city and because GP points accrue according to specialties, it makes sense to have specialized cities in CIV. I am for a science city (oxford university + great library), a military city (pentagon + heroic epic + west point), a culture city (hermitage + globe theater), an economic city (wall street), and will put the national epic in the city with the most wonders (and most GP points).

In general, keeping a flow of military units from at least one city will keep your cities happy (large cities get upset without protection) and defended. I also try to keep one city pumping out missionaries throughout almost the entire game, occasionally switching production to another city to construct buildings in the city. In my first couple games when I did not continue to produce both military and missionary units in peace time and war time, it caused major problems for me in spite of large leads in other areas.

CIV rewards the creation of specialized cities. I try to create at least 2 cities of each specialty because of the need to build infrastructure buildings in between building military or religious units, wonders, etc. Specialist cities make sense because you can't build every building in every city, and specialization helps you to leverage your city placement by putting buildings in the cities where they will do the most good.

The first step in deciding the division of labor between specialized cities is to evaluate the surrounding land. A city in an area with luxury resources could be a great trade/science city, while one in an area with many mines and high production would likely make a good military city for creating units, or for rapidly building wonders. A city with abundant food supply would make a good specialist city to increase great people generation.

Military City

Build in: productive area with high hammer yield (mines, watermills, etc)

Buildings:

Barracks

Forge

Factory

Power source (coal, hydro, nuclear),

Granary

Aqueduct

National wonders:

first city: Heroic Epic (+100% military production in city), West Point (+4 exp/military unit)

second city: Red Cross (free Medic I promotion), Ironworks (near iron or coal) -- consider designating this one a military city from the time iron appears on the map.

World Wonders:

Pentagon (+2 experience for units trained in any city, can be built anywhere)

Discussion: You will need many military units during the game, so why build them from just anywhere when you can build them quickly in a specialized city and get free experience points to boot?

Science City

Build in: area with abundant commerce

Improvements: focus on cottages ->towns

Buildings:

Academy (+50% research, requires great scientist)

Library (+25% research)

Observatory (+25% research)

University (+25% research)

Laboratory (+25% research)

Monastery (+10% research, but becomes obsolete – may skip this one)

National wonders:

Oxford University (+100% research)

World Wonders:

Great Library (+2 scientists, expires)

Merchant City

Build in: area with abundant commerce

Improvements: focus on cottages ->towns

Buildings:

Market (+25% gold)

Grocer (+25% gold)

Bank (+50% gold)

Airport (+1 trade route)

National Wonders:

Wall Street (+100% gold)

GP Focus: great merchant

Culture City

Consider combining with science city as many science improvements also generate culture. I don't generally build a culture-only city for that reason, I go for culture/science. But here are the culture listings for those interested in culture victory, not including science improvements.

Buildings:

Temple (+1 culture)

Monastery (+2 culture)

Cathedral or equivalent (+50% culture)

Theater (+3 culture)

Broadcast tower (+50% culture)

National Wonders:

Hermitage (+100% culture)

Globe theater (+6 culture)

World Wonders:

Hollywood (+50% culture)

Rock n' Roll (+50% culture)

Broadway (+50% culture)

Sistine chapel (+2 culture per specialist in all cities)

If going for a culture victory, consider balancing your national and world culture wonders between 3 cities to allow each to achieve legendary culture.

Great People City

Obviously this one should be combined with another city of your choice, as the world and national wonders built in other cities contribute GP points. I like to make my GP city one that focuses on GP types that I find to be the most valuable (great engineers -- can rush wonders, or perhaps scientists -- can create academy, rather than prophets, artists, or merchants)

National wonder: National Epic (+100% GP birth rate in city)

World Wonders:

Parthenon (+50% GP birth rate in all cities)

Great Library (+2 scientists in city, but expires)

Statue of Liberty (+1 specialist in all cities)

synergistic civic: pacifism (+100% GP rate, no upkeep)

WONDERS

It is rarely possible to get every wonder, and so some prioritizing is in order of which wonders offer the greatest benefits. Some wonders offer considerable early benefits, but expire. Others offer mediocre benefits that expire regardless (the Hagia Sophia is infamous for frequently becoming obsolete only shortly after it is constructed). Still others offer great game-long benefits.

This is a list of wonders that I make priorities, keeping in mind that the wonders different players favor will vary widely depending on their play style and tactics.

Priority Expiring Wonders

Stonehenge -- obelisk, +1 culture in every city, expires @ Calendar. Interestingly, unlike CivIII, wonders seem to expire when YOU get the expiring tech, not when your neighbors do. So I sometimes try to hold off on trading for the calendar tech until all my cities have experienced border expansion from Stonehenge, *Great Library* -- +2 scientists is a big deal at a time when many of your cities can't dedicate the pop to specialists, especially if you build this in your great people focus city. Unfortunately the GL expires. *Parthenon* -- +50% GP birth rate in all cities. Fabulous for philosophical civs, but unfortunately doesn't last forever.

Non-Expiring Wonders

Hanging Gardens - +1 pop, +1 health in all cities. This is a huge early wonder that can catapult your civ ahead, especially if you have many small or modest-sized cities. Adding an extra pop and health point to every city boosts your economy, your research, your productivity, etc.

Notre Dame - +1 happiness for all cities on continent

Versailles - reduces maintenance in nearby cities

Statue of Liberty -- a free specialist in every city. Absolutely fabulous, especially for philosophical civs. Probably my # 1 wonder in the game.

Pentagon - +2 experience points for units trained in all cities

Three Gorges Dam - power for all cities on continent located near a river

Eiffel Tower - (free broadcast tower in every city) gives a big culture boost

GREAT PEOPLE

Now one of my favorite topics -- maximizing great people. This is one where you can really get some great

synergy between traits, civics, wonders, and improvements. If you want a lot of great people, get as many of these as possible.

Note that all bonuses are additive, not multiplicative. For example, 2 100% bonuses on top of a 100% base produce a 300% rate (100% base +100% x2), not 400% (they only add their bonus to the BASE rate, not to the final rate after other adjustments). Also, all fractions in the game are rounded DOWN (i.e. a 25% bonus of 7 is rounded down to 1, a 25% bonus of 8 is necessary for +2)

Traits:

Philosophical trait : +100% GP generation civ-wide

Civics:

labor – caste system: unlimited scientists, merchants, artists in all cities

economy – mercantilism: +1 free specialist per city; or (in games with many rivers) state property for the watermill food bonus, allowing higher POP and thus more specialists

religion – pacifism: +100% GP birth rate in cities with state religion

National wonders:

national epic – +100% GP in city where built (only)

World Wonders:

Parthenon: +50% GP generation civ-wide, expires with chemistry

Statue of Liberty: +1 free specialist in all cities

great library: +2 free scientists in city where built, but expires.

A civ with max upgrades (not including great library) would have:

- a 300% great people rate (100% base + 100% philosophical + 100% pacifism) + 50% from Parthenon (before expires) + 100% more in city with national wonder
- 2 free specialists in all cities (mercantilism statue of liberty). At 300% return on a 3 GP base per specialist x 2 specialists, this would provide 18 GP points *per turn* even in your least developed cities with no wonders.
- unlimited ability to allocate scientists, artists, and merchants in all cities.

Note again that the wonder bonuses expire when YOU get the tech in question, not your neighbors...therefore a philosophical civ with the Parthenon may want to push back getting chemistry as late as possible.

Of course some great people types are more valuable than others. Great engineers allow you to rush wonders which can incur key benefits for your civ in a close game. And great scientists can allow you to build an academy (+50% research) in every city. great merchants, artists, and prophets, while still valuable, have effects that are generally somewhat more modest in terms of long-term gameplay. Since the chance of getting a great person of different types depends on the wonders and specialists in each city, I like having separate cities focus on great engineers and scientists without mixing with the other types as much as possible (you don't want to have your city with engineering wonders drowned out by large numbers of merchant, artist, or priest specialists pushing the GP probability towards other types). Merchants, artists, and prophets I don't have a strong preference between, and so will build wonders generating all 3 in the same city.

Bonuses allowing you to turn citizens into engineers are generated only by:

Forge (allows 1 engineer)

Factory (allows 2 engineers)

Ironworks (allows 3 engineers)

Engineer GP points are generated by:

West Point (+1 GP)
Hanging Gardens (+2)
Pentagon (+2)
Pyramids (+2)
Three Gorges Dam (+2)

as you can see, your military city is the most natural choice for an engineer GP city (forge + factory + ironworks + west point + pentagon).

since forges eventually go almost everywhere, I like to make sure that the engineer slot is filled in every city with a forge.

As the cost for great people increase throughout the game, diminishing returns are eventually reached. Later in the game, the cost of great people goes up and up, while the benefit of great people often declines, since the earlier you get great people, the longer they will benefit your civilization. However, your civilization should also increase in its capacity to generate great people over time, civics are chosen, as wonders are built and citizens are assigned as specialists. With appropriate tactics, many great people can still be generated even in the late game.

Every great person can cause either an instant benefit, provide a tech bonus, or add a long-term bonus to cities. The benefits must be carefully considered. In **most** cases, I prefer to use great people in a manner that augments the long-term productivity of my cities, although there are exceptional cases where great people are best used to rush a tech or a wonder.

Two types of great people present no-brainers for their use:

1. Great prophets. Before using great prophets in any other way, make sure that you have created the religion-specific wonder in any founding religious city under your control. If you have made any attempt at all to spread the religion, or if you are conquering the founding city of a religion that is widely accepted, this can produce massive financial benefits that dwarf virtually any other use of great people.

2. Great scientists. Use them to create academies in all of your top science cities. Which would you rather have -- an extra +6 or so science per turn in the city of your choice, or a 50% increase in science in a city that is already generating 50, 75, or 200 beakers per turn? Although the increase acts only on the base number of commerce points applied to research (before other modifiers are applied), a great scientist can result in massive research output for cities, especially in conjunction with other science improvements (library/university/observatory/Oxford University/etc).

For other great people, I usually prefer to join them to a city, with occasional exceptions as previously acknowledged.

Great artists. If you are going for a cultural victory, great artists are your friend. A very nice strategy for cultural victory on Monarch level, using great artists either by joining to a city or as "culture bombs" to titrate legendary culture among three cities is presented by walkerjks here:

<http://forums.civfanatics.com/showthread.php?t=138647>

If you are not going for a cultural victory, I find that in most cases it is preferable to join great artists to border

cities or captured cities instead of invoking the "culture bomb." Great artists produce +12 to +15 culture per turn, which is the equivalent of many cultural buildings (library = +2 culture, theater = +3, etc) and will quickly expand the city's borders -- in addition to any cultural multipliers the city may have (cathedrals, hermitage, civics, etc). In this way, you still continue to receive the commerce benefits of the great artist throughout the game, speeding your research and filling your coffers.

Great merchant. The great merchant is the ONLY great person that offers a food bonus (+1 food, +6 commerce appears typical). I prefer to join great merchants to high-commerce cities that focus on great people creation (the city with the national epic is often a great choice), since more food allows you to allocate more specialists, further increasing great people output.

Great engineers. As for great prophets, the surplus productivity is welcome. These often go in my capital or most productive city or cities. A city with ironworks makes a great choice for great engineer placement in the late game.

CHOP-RUSHING

Chop rushing is a great way to jump ahead in the early game. The first mention I know of was in this thread by AlexFrog:

<http://forums.civfanatics.com/showthread.php?t=137292>

I prefer a somewhat modified version of the strategy. The strategy involves founding initial cities in areas with a large number of trees within their "fat cross" area. The player researches bronze working immediately while building a worker in the capital city before building any other units or buildings. Once the worker is done (12-15 turns) and bronze working is researched, the worker immediately goes to work chopping trees around the capital. Each tree chopped results in 30 hammers, which can rocket a level 1 city that may have only 1, 2, or 3 hammers far ahead.

The most logical initial use of "chop-rushing" is for settlers and workers, since your cities are normally stagnant (do not grow) while these units are being produced, and because these units are vital to the growth and productivity of your civilization. I save trees to chop-rush settlers, workers, or wonders, since the construction of buildings or military units allows your cities to grow during the production phase, while production of the former two does not, and the third category (wonders) is a race. Chop-rushing typically allows me to plant 2-3 times as many cities as my closest AI competitors on noble level.

Of course, settlers must never be sent out undefended, so I like to first build at least one (possibly two) warriors, sending at least one out to explore and pop goody huts (in addition to the starting warrior) while the second will act as your settler escort. I periodically build warriors during the rapid expansion phase to ensure that my cities and settlers are adequately defended.

Because of maintenance costs increasing with both distance and city number (and I will place cities at long distances from my capital when necessary to secure important resources), it is impractical to build a civilization by the exclusive virtue of chop-rushing. There must be a balance. Once I get three or four cities, I let one or two grow and develop -- building a granary or military units to increase in size and to defend the borders, while the others chop-rush. I also assign some workers to build improvements very early -- cottages in particular, in addition to improvements required by special resources -- in order to ensure that city commerce, on average, is in excess of upkeep costs, allowing continued rapid research and continued

growth. As a rough rule of thumb, on noble level, if my research percentage falls below 70%, that is a warning sign to me that I need to better develop the city economic base by building more cottages and letting cities grow to a larger size before expanding.

Chop-rushing can also be a terrific way to get wonders, especially when you have special resources that speed wonder building. For example, Stonehenge costs 120 hammers, but if you have stone, every forest chopped will give double (not 30, but 60) hammers. Therefore, you only need to chop two trees to build Stonehenge in a city with stone -- as opposed to the many turns it would take to build it without chop-rushing. This is a great way to get key wonders as a non-industrious civ, and the ability of any civilization to do this really waters down the value of the industrious trait.

TECHNOLOGY

Great variability comes in here. Depending on your civilization traits and technologies, your level, and your play style, you may have different technological priorities.

I favor chop-rushing for early expansion, going straight for bronze working. Then I go for pottery (to build cottages ASAP) and from there to alphabet (to trade techs). After alphabet, I trade with the AI as much as possible. I go for mathematics (to get hanging gardens) and then try to grab a religion -- Confucianism or, if I miss that, one of the others.

If you are playing as a civ with early religious technologies, you may wish to shoot straight for an early religion. I prefer the path that leads to Hinduism/Judaism since if you are beaten to Hinduism, Judaism is right around the corner, while Buddhism is a dead end (at least for a while) and the AI seems to go for it quickly. Monotheism also has the benefit of offering the organized religion civic, which at +25% building construction (including wonders!) can prove to be an enormous benefit to your civilization's development. This, as well as the early spread of religion from your cities (with happiness etc), can make an early religion very, very worthwhile. From there, you can go for bronze-working and chop rush, or you can go straight for alphabet, trade for bronze working (which is typically readily available once alphabet is discovered), and chop rush.

Either way has advantages and drawbacks, but both playing styles can be viable. There undoubtedly others as well, but the above two are my favorites.

Crucial early-era techs

Bronze Working = chop rushing. 'nuf said.

Monotheism. For the organized religion civic, as well as to give you 1 (possibly 2 - Judaism and Hinduism) religions. Sometimes I just pick up Hinduism, go for alphabet, and then come back for (or trade for) monotheism, as you won't be building too many buildings in the very early game -- mostly units (warriors, settlers, workers), and the upkeep cost isn't worthwhile until your civ becomes more financially secure.

Alphabet. Once you get this, you can trade techs with your neighbors. Being a tech broker can save you a lot of trouble and time so that you don't have to research most of the other ancient age techs yourself.

Pottery. Being able to build cottages early and often is key to jump-starting your economy and to give your cottages the time they need to develop into towns to really rake in the dough in the late game.

Iron Working. Not as high priority, but clearing unhealthy jungles is also important, depending on your local terrain.

Middle-age techs

Mathematics. Hanging Gardens -- + 1 POP and +1 health in all your cities is huge, especially when you have a lot of small and moderate-size cities. The hanging gardens can really explode your productivity when you have a large empire from a chop-rush settler rush.

Music (free great artist)

Philosophy (pacifism)

Military Tradition (cavalry rule the middle ages)

Divine Right (Versailles/Islam)

Metallurgy (watermill)

Democracy (emancipation & universal suffrage).

Communism (state property)

Then to any other techs that improve the benefits of your improvements (i.e. electricity).

I also try to pick up the techs that offer free great people or free techs. These techs obviously represent a priority, as only the first discoverer gets the bonus.

MILITARY STRATEGY

Anticipation And Preparation

The computer will attack suddenly and in force in CIV. It is not unusual for the computer to DOW someone and raze their city with a stack of units in the same turn. The AI, like human players, is an opportunist. If you happen to build a city right next to enemy military units, or if AI players see a poorly defended city near their military units, they are more likely to declare war than if your cities were defended and settlers were escorted. Close borders also spark tensions. Different religion is also a major cause of hostility. The AI can and does declare war even when there are mildly positive relations, so don't be too smug at your relationship score. You must defend your cities and resources. Even if you are not a warmonger, build a credible defense force. If your military is much weaker than your neighbors, you will soon find yourself in war. Anticipate attacks in advance. Is your neighbor massing catapults and swordsmen near your border? What are the stacked archer and warrior doing near your cities? Assume the worst, be observant, and be informed. Judge your enemy by their capability, not their words or relations.

Border Cities

Beware of border cities without a large cultural buffer between other civilizations. In one game I had a brilliant idea to build the forbidden palace in a border city. Then while I was engaged in a war against the Mongols on the other side of my empire, Saladin declared war and conquered the city instantly with hordes of catapults, knights, and crossbowmen. Of course expensive cultural improvements are lost once a city is conquered. Don't put anything too critical in border cities, especially those without a significant buffer zone, and don't get too involved in constructing major buildings in border cities until you have them well-defended with strong contemporary units. Don't leave your back side exposed. And don't let success in the tech race come at the expense of national security.

Strategy

When starting a war, consider your objectives. What are your goals? Acquisition of specific resources or cities? Capturing a wonder? Total annexation? Or, if caught by surprise, would you be happy to get away with a white peace? Once you have determined your goals, come up with a strategic plan to get there. Make sure

that your unit mix is balanced and well-thought out. More than once in my early games, I found myself besieging cities with large stacks of units but no catapults -- bad idea. What are you going to do about city defenses? Are their resources you can deny your opponent? Will you create a two or three pronged attack and exploit vulnerabilities? Will you land a horde of cavalry and catapults by his capital for a sneak attack after shipping them behind enemy lines? It is much easier to achieve objectives if you know what your specific objectives are and have a viable plan to achieve them. It's far more effective to have a plan and fine-tune it as needed while in process than to fly by the seat of your pants and make it up as you go along.

Also take time to consider your opponent's strategy...*especially* if playing a human. Look at your own empire and assess your own vulnerabilities. Is YOUR iron supply undefended? Could an enemy wreak havoc with a few knights shipped in to attack rear cities? Do you have rows of cottages in a border city ripe for plundering? If you were your enemy, what would you do? If your vulnerabilities are lost on you, be assured that they will not be lost on a competent opponent.

Resource Denial

When planning a war, aim to take out key military and civilian resources. The resource screen shows you exactly what resources your opponents have. Some of the resources, like copper and iron, are essential for war. If your enemy has one source of iron and you fortify on that square with good defenders and pillage it, your enemy will instantly lose the ability to make swordsmen -- and many other units, unless he has a copper supply as well. No copper, iron, or horses? Suddenly your formerly formidable medieval opponent is back in the stone age and is able to produce only warriors and archers. A few strategic moves of this nature can turn the tide of a war.

Other special resources are worth pillaging also. If your opponent has large cities that are marginally happy or healthy, pillaging a few luxury or health resources can catastrophically damage commerce, tech speed, and productivity across his entire empire. Pillaging of specialty resources in this way has a far greater effect than the pillaging of cottages, since the effects are felt in every connected city.

To Pillage or Not to Pillage

Some argue for pillaging as many of your opponents cottages as possible in order to cause long-term damage to his research and economy. Against a superior or closely-matched opponent, this can be a good idea. However, it can be shortsighted if you have the upper hand.

If I am convinced that I have superior force and can take a city, I don't pillage cottages, mines, or watermills. Given how long cottages take to develop, I pillage them ONLY when I think that I am unable to take a city outright during the current war. As attractive as the quick gold from pillaging seems, it is trivial compared to having a long-term free revenue source that your opponent built for you -- adding insult to injury. Conquered cities will often have high maintenance due to their distance from your capital and the incremental augmentation of city number, and if they can pay their own expenses right off the bat, your warmongering will be much more economically sustainable.

Diplomacy

When evenly matched or over-matched, diplomacy plays an immense role. If the Mongols catch you by surprise and burn a couple border cities, what better way to pay them back than bribing their neighbors with tech or gold to declare war on them? Sure, they may have thought they were smart to exploit a momentary vulnerability when their keshiks found a lightly-guarded city...but finding themselves in a war on two or three

fronts will wipe the smile off their faces and take the pressure off you. If I am caught by surprise in a war for which I am not fully prepared or do not want, I do not hesitate to trade prime techs to bribe allies to join on my side.

SCREENSHOTS

A few screenies from a recent pangaea/noble game using this strategy. The player is on the verge of a domination victory which could have been achieved far earlier, except that expansion has been limited to allow demonstration of specific points of mid-game strategy.

99 great people points per turn in the capital city with philosophical, pacifism, Parthenon, mercantilism, national epic, and great library. This is still mid-game: not a single citizen has been allocated as a specialist beyond those automatically granted by mercantilism and the great library, and the statue of liberty has not yet been built. All of these except the last two apply to every city, so great people are popping up from around the empire every 3 turns or so.



The city is healthy, productive, and growing.



Allocating just two more specialists increases GP production to 153/turn, although the city would need more food supply to sustain this (I subsequently added 2 farms -- and biology).



A view of the founding city of Confucianism. The Kong Miao (sp?) is generating 44 gold per turn (i.e. 44 cities have adopted Confucianism) -- and then this gets a +200% modifier from economy buildings in the town (grocer +25%, market +25%, bank +50%, wall street +100%) With the financial slider on only 20%, the city is generating 189 gold per turn. If the financial slider were set on 0% (100% research), the city would still be raking in 144 gold/turn (132 from the Kong Miao + 12 from the great engineer, after building bonuses) This alone pays almost the entire city upkeep cost for the entire empire.



A picture of Thebes, which I captured from the Egyptians because it is the founding city of Buddhism. 27 cities have adopted Buddhism, so the Mahabodi gives +27 gold per turn -- plus a 100% modifier from a bank, market, and grocer, for +54 gold/turn.



A shot of York (founding city of Confucianism) and London (capital) shortly before Wall Street is completed in York.



World View