BASIC ACTIVITIES OF CIVILIZATION

1. TOOL MAKING
   All civilizations develop tools. A plow is a tool used to alter the environment for
   agriculture. Boats, and weapons are also examples of tools. Eating utensils may also
   be classified as tools. The gold miners in West Africa developed tools.

2. PRODUCING, CONSUMING, EXCHANGING
   People along river valleys used plows to turn the land and grow crops. This provided
   them not only with enough to feed themselves, but a surplus that could be traded.
   Some cultures mined natural resources that they traded for other goods. An example
   of this type of producing and exchanging is the salt/gold trade of the West African
   Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay.

3. TRANSPORTATION
   Geography determines the method of transportation in many societies. Trade goods
   in ancient Africa were transported in boats along great rivers, by carts over land, and,
   and by camel caravan through the desert. The largest caravans in the Saharan
   Sudanic region carried the gold-salt trade and pilgrims to Mecca.

4. COMMUNICATION
   Early writing developed in order to mark the contents of storage vessels, and to
   record trade transactions. It later recorded great deeds of the rulers and kings and
   their gods, and provided a systematic way of communicating with others. The
   writings of Ibn Battuta chronicled the pilgrimage of Mansa Musa and told of the great
   wealth of the Empire of Mali throughout Africa, the Middle East, and even to Europe.

4. EDUCATION
   People need to be taught important knowledge about agriculture, trade, and writing,
   to insure that a civilization thrives. In ancient civilizations, not all people were taught
   to read and write. Some were only taught the skills of a particular trade. Education
   was controlled by priest-kings and scribes. The great Mali emperor, Mansa Musa
   established great Islamic learning centers at Timbuktu and Gao. The griot (story
   teller) of West Africa educated the people about the history of the great Mali Empire
   and its rulers Sundiata and Mansa Musa.

5. PROTECTING AND CONSERVING
   It was important to protect and conserve a kingdom's land, culture, way of life and its
   history. The history was inscribed on buildings and on early paper, history. In some
   cultures, the history was conserved through the oral tradition. In West Africa, the
   griot, story-telling tradition continues to this day. Trained armies protected the
   civilization, thus insuring the country was protected from foreign invasion. Armies
   could also increase the size of a kingdom through conquest. Mansa Musa's general,
   Sagmandia expanded the Mali empire by capturing Gao, the Songhai capital, which
   greatly expanded the Mali empire.

7. GOVERNING
   To provide order to the society, insure protection of political boundaries, and interact
   with other cultures, a framework of government was put in place. Governments
   established rules and laws for the people, and controlled interactions with other
cultures. The Mali empire was ruled by an emperor, called a mansa. Mansa Musa was a great Mali mansa in the 14th century.

8. RELIGIOUS, PHILOSOPHICAL AND MORAL BELIEFS
A civilizations' beliefs become codified in ritual, and a system of right conduct, which is taught to all citizens, and social class and conduct developed. The religious beliefs generally mirror the geography and environment. Early river civilizations believed in many gods, which took both animal and human form. Some early civilizations were animistic, believing all things possessed a spirit. Sometimes, religion is brought as a result of trade or conquest. Islam was brought to the west African by traders in the 8th century, and by the 12th century the rulers and people of Mali worshiped Allah. The great Mali king, Mansa Musa's made a pilgrimage to Mecca. This pilgrimage was well documented by the Islamic traveler, Ibn Battuta.

9. AESTHETICS
Early civilizations began to use art in its pure form, as decoration. Art also appeared on functional objects such as pottery, on burial items, in body art, in jewelry, on paper, and in architecture. In the ancient city of Jenna, clay figures and pots have been unearthed. The architecture of the clay Mosques of Timbuktu were considered both unique and beautiful.

10. RECREATION
As civilizations developed and evolved, the use of tools increased man's ability to complete work in less time. This extra time (leisure) was used for games and relaxation.