

# The Origins and Impacts of the Persian Empire

The origin of the Persian Empire can be attributed to the leadership of one man—Cyrus the Great. A brilliant and powerful Persian king, Cyrus' strategy for enlarging the Persian kingdom was to conquer nearby lands and then unite them into one empire. Through his skillful leadership and a strong military, Cyrus was able to create a vast empire that would last for more than two hundred years. The origins and impacts of Cyrus the Great's empire made it possible for the emperors who came after him, such as Darius I, to continue to expand and control the Persian Empire.

A people called the Medes controlled the land that connects east and west Asia. The land was called Media. In this land were small Persian kingdoms. Around 550 B.C. Cyrus the Great, a Persian king, took control of these lands from the Medes. He then formed a government and chose both Median and Persian nobles to be civilian officials. Next, Cyrus used his strong military to attack states throughout Anatolia (Asia Minor). Soon this region fell under his control. He went on to conquer the lands to the east known as the Fertile Crescent. The Persian empire was now immense.

Cyrus was a skillful ruler. He adopted a policy of toleration toward the people he conquered. For example, he allowed them to speak their own languages, practice their own religions, and follow their own ways of life. He also declared the first Charter of Human Rights. Etched on a clay cylinder, this charter set forth Cyrus' goals and policies. His respect for the people made Cyrus popular and made it easier for him to create a peaceful and stable empire.

After Cyrus' death, there was a period of unrest under a weak emperor. Then a strong emperor, Darius I, came to power. Building on what Cyrus had achieved, Darius divided the Persian Empire into several provinces to make it easier to govern. He appointed a governor called a satrap to carry out his orders in each province and to collect taxes. Darius also started use of a Royal Road that allowed messages, soldiers, and mail to be sent quickly across the empire. He promoted trade and business and established a law code. The Persian Empire would have a long life because of the efforts of Darius.

The Persian Empire had a great impact on the region and its people. Cyrus ruled through fear and tolerance. Once people were conquered, he showed them much generosity. For example, after conquering Fertile Crescent lands, he freed the Hebrew people from Babylonian rule. As a result, the Hebrews viewed Cyrus as a liberator and supported him. Cyrus' tolerant approach toward different religions also gained him much support. Because of this, his subjects seldom revolted and usually lived in peace. This made governing the empire an easier task.

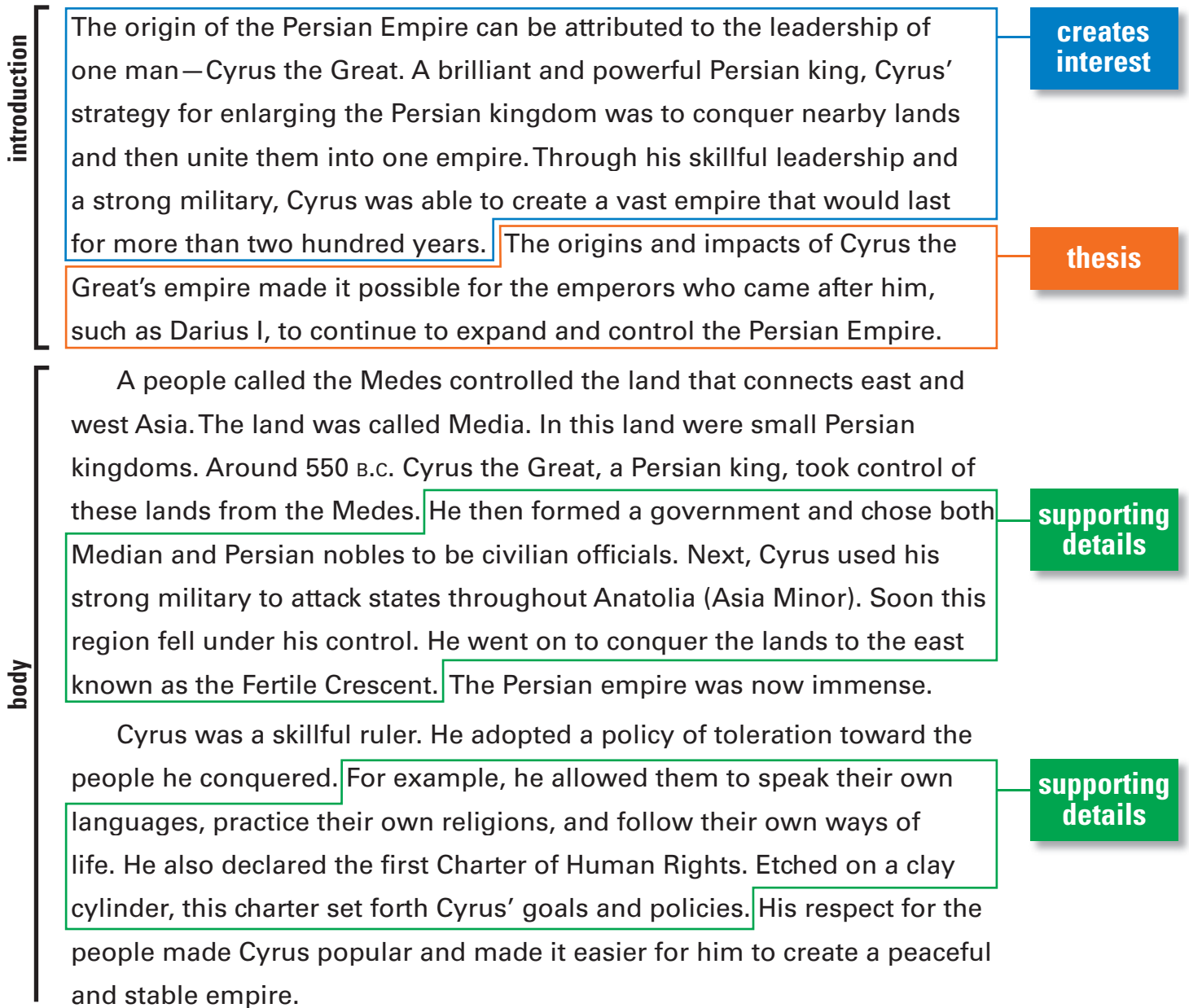
The impact of Darius' rule was also great. By dividing the empire into provinces governed by satraps, Darius created a government structure that helped him to control and finance the empire. The satraps gathered taxes for the empire. The Royal Road enhanced communications and enabled Cyrus to receive news from all areas of his vast domain. This allowed him to put down uprisings quickly, defend his borders, and send his commands.

The Persian Empire (550 B.C.–331 B.C.) was created through a combination of a strong military, skillful leadership, tolerance, and an effective government. These elements also had a major impact on the lives of the people within the Persian Empire and on the running of the empire.

## Organization

An expository composition has three basic parts: the **introduction**, the **body**, and the **conclusion**. The introduction **creates interest** and states a clear **thesis**, or main idea. The body provides **supporting details** in the form of facts and examples. The **conclusion** summarizes the information and restates the thesis.

### The Origins and Impacts of the Persian Empire



## The Origins and Impacts of the Persian Empire (continued)

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supporting  
details

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conclusion

body

conclusion

## Cause and Effect

Historical expositions are often organized to show causes and effects. How will you organize your composition to explain the origins or impacts of empires?

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causes

effects

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Cyrus was a skillful ruler. He adopted a policy of toleration toward the people he conquered. For example, he allowed them to speak their own languages, practice their own religions, and follow their own ways of life. He also declared the first Charter of Human Rights. Etched on a clay cylinder, this charter set forth Cyrus’ goals and policies. His respect for the people made Cyrus popular and made it easier for him to create a peaceful and stable empire.

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causes

The Persian Empire would have a long life because of the efforts of Darius.

effects

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causes

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causes

This allowed him to put down uprisings quickly, defend his borders, and send his commands.

effects

## Supporting Facts

Good expository writing is supported by facts. These facts prove the accuracy of the thesis and provide information about the subject being discussed. What facts will you use to prove your thesis and provide information?

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facts

## Supporting examples

Expository writing is also supported by examples. Examples are specific details that help to clarify and support a statement. Examples usually contain one or more facts.

Cyrus was a skillful ruler. He adopted a policy of toleration toward the people he conquered. For example, he allowed them to speak their own languages, practice their own religions, and follow their own ways of life.

statement

example

The Persian Empire had a great impact on the region and its people. Cyrus ruled through fear and tolerance. Once people were conquered, he showed them much generosity. For example, after conquering Fertile Crescent lands, he freed the Hebrew people from Babylonian rule. As a result, the Hebrews viewed Cyrus as a liberator and supported him.

statement

example