

# Lesson 3 Alexander the Great

## MAIN IDEAS

**Government** Philip II of Macedonia conquered Greece.

**Government** Alexander built a huge empire that spread across parts of Europe and Asia.

**Geography** Alexander spread Greek culture and influence throughout his empire.

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## The Kingdom of Macedonia

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION** Who conquered the Greek city-states?

### A Military Genius

- 23-year-old King Philip II of Macedonia planned an empire
  - had been hostage in Greek city of Thebes, learned tactics
  - saw advantage of full-time professional army, not citizen army
- Philip built professional army; devised new formations, tactics
  - experimented with combining cavalry and infantry, used new weapons
  - used battering rams on gates, **catapults** to hurl stones at enemy walls

### Philip Conquers Greece

- Philip conquered nearby lands, then turned to Greek city-states
  - Greeks were weak, disorganized after Peloponnesian War
- Philip conquered Greeks by 338 B.C., became ruler of city-states
  - dictatorial rule ended Greek democracy

### Alexander Takes Over

- Philip prepared to attack Persia, but was assassinated in 336 B.C.
- His 20-year-old son, Alexander, took the throne

## REVIEW QUESTION

Why were the Greek city-states open to an attack by Philip?

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# Alexander Tries to Conquer the World

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION** How did Alexander build an empire?

## Alexander Defeats Persia

- Alexander had been tutored by Greek scholars, trained in army
- Carried on Philip's plan to create an empire, prepared to attack Persia
- Greek city-state of Thebes rebelled, was destroyed by Alexander
  - this act made other city-states too fearful to rebel
- Alexander moved to Anatolia; attacked, defeated Persian forces
  - bold tactics were successful against strong Persian resistance
- Alexander turned south, was welcomed by Persian-controlled Egypt
  - thankful Egyptians made him their pharaoh
- Moved across Mesopotamia toward Persia
  - struck Persepolis—the royal capital of Persia
- Controlled Persian Empire by 331 B.C.

## Alexander's Other Conquests

- Pushed east for next three years, conquered parts of Central Asia
- Armies reached India's Indus River Valley in 326 B.C.
- Alexander wanted to keep going, but armies insisted on turning back
- Returned to Babylon in 323 B.C.; Alexander fell ill, died at age 32
  - because of achievements, he is remembered as **Alexander the Great**
- Three generals divided Alexander's empire after his death

## REVIEW QUESTION

How far eastward in Asia did Alexander build his empire?

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# The Legacy of Alexander

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION** How did culture change under Alexander's rule?

## A Blend of Cultures

- Alexander spread Greek culture, set up colonies, built cities
  - left Greeks to rule lands; Greek became common language
- Alexander adopted Persian styles, customs
  - combined Egyptian, Indian, Persian, Greek cultures
  - cultural blend known as **Hellenistic** after *Hellas*, Greek name for Greece
- Combined knowledge led to science, medicine discoveries

## Alexandria

- It was said Alexander named 70 cities Alexandria
- Most famous Hellenistic city, **Alexandria**, Egypt, founded in 332 B.C.
  - important learning center; featured library of major collections
- Temple of Muses—goddesses who rule arts, sciences
  - today we would call its collection of arts, sciences a museum
- Enormous lighthouse was one of Seven Wonders of the World

## REVIEW QUESTION

How did Hellenistic culture develop?

## Lesson Summary

- Philip II, king of Macedonia, conquered Greece
- Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire and parts of Central Asia.
- Hellenistic culture—a blend of Greek, Persian, Egyptian, and Indian cultures—was created.

## Why It Matters Now . . .

The blended culture created by Alexander's empire forms a basis for culture in the countries that exist in those lands today.