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.

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?
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?
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.