

Alexander the Great

A Reading A-Z Level R Leveled Book
Word Count: 902

Connections

Writing

Research Aristotle and his teachings. Write a report describing how his teachings influenced Alexander the Great.

Social Studies

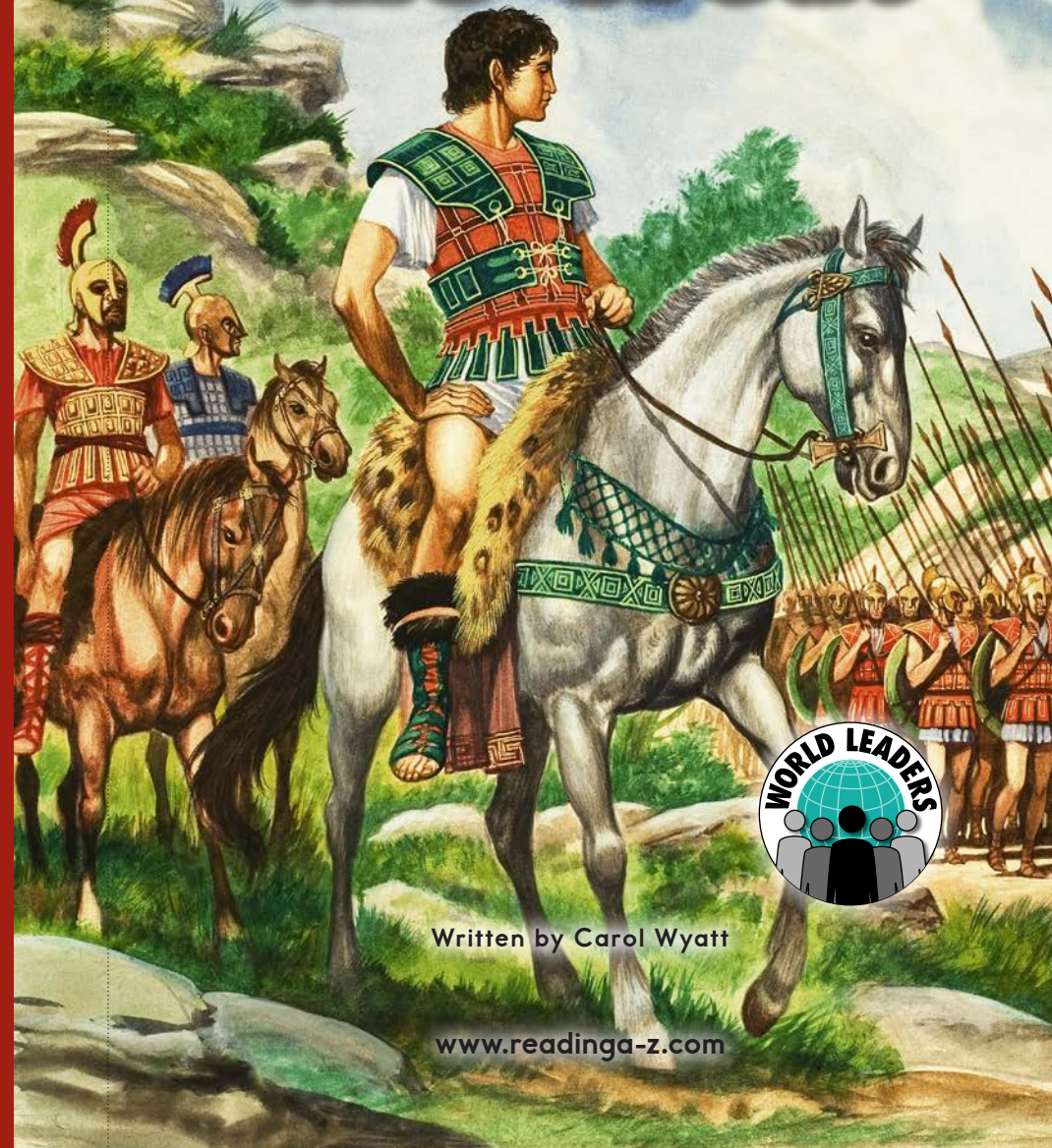
Research to learn more about ancient Macedonia. Make a poster describing the kingdom at the time Alexander was king, including details such as population, language, religion, and common cultural traditions.

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Alexander the Great



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Focus Question

How did Alexander the Great create his large empire?

Words to Know

city-states	explore
claim	intelligence
control	javelins
dominated	responsibilities
empire	

Front cover: A British painting shows Alexander the Great and his army.

Title page: A statue of Alexander the Great

Page 3: A painting shows Alexander the Great on his horse Bucephalus in battle.

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Alexander the Great
World Leaders
Level R Leveled Book
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Correlation

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A Great Leader

Nearly 2,300 years ago, there lived a powerful leader named Alexander the Great. Alexander was the king of Macedonia, which was part of ancient Greece. Alexander set out with his armies to **explore** and **claim** new lands. He ended up with a great **empire**.

Preparing to Be King

Alexander was born in 356 BC. Alexander's father, Philip II, was king of Macedonia before Alexander. With the support of a powerful army, Philip kept Macedonia and most of the surrounding Greek **city-states** under his **control**. Alexander's mother, Olympias, firmly wanted her son to be king of Macedonia one day. Alexander wanted to be a powerful leader.

Alexander's father, Philip II, became king of Macedonia in 359 BC.



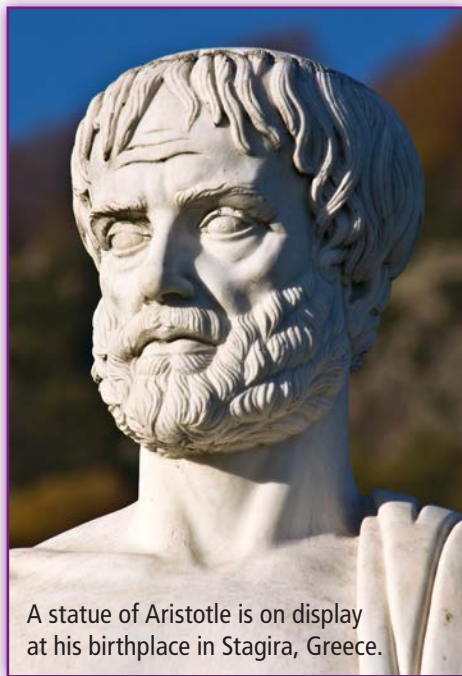
Olympias, Alexander's mother, knew that if her son were king, she would keep her place among royalty.



Alexander's strengths became clear at an early age. When he was twelve years old, Philip decided not to buy a horse because it was too nervous. Alexander noticed that the horse was frightened by its own shadow. By turning the horse's head away from its shadow, he was able to calm the horse. Alexander then rode his new horse, whose name was Bucephalus, with ease. Bucephalus and Alexander would be together for life.

When Alexander was growing up, his father was often away. Philip relied on special teachers to prepare his son to be king. Young men of Greece had to learn to hunt, ride horses, and fight with swords, **javelins**, and bows. Alexander and his friends needed to learn these skills to survive in battle.

Philip asked Aristotle—a very wise man—to teach Alexander science, history, and other subjects. Aristotle was respected for his **intelligence**. He also helped Alexander appreciate art and culture.



A statue of Aristotle is on display at his birthplace in Stagira, Greece.



Alexander became king of Macedonia when he was twenty years old.

As he grew older, Alexander took on more **responsibilities**, including leading soldiers in battle. Alexander was raised to be the next king. However, in 337 BC, Philip married a woman who was born in Macedonia. Olympias was not a Macedonian. If Philip had a baby with his new wife, the child would be first in line to become king instead of Alexander.

In 336 BC, Philip's new wife had a baby girl. In the same year, a man killed Philip. The new baby was too young to take the throne, and after Philip's death, Alexander became king.

Becoming King

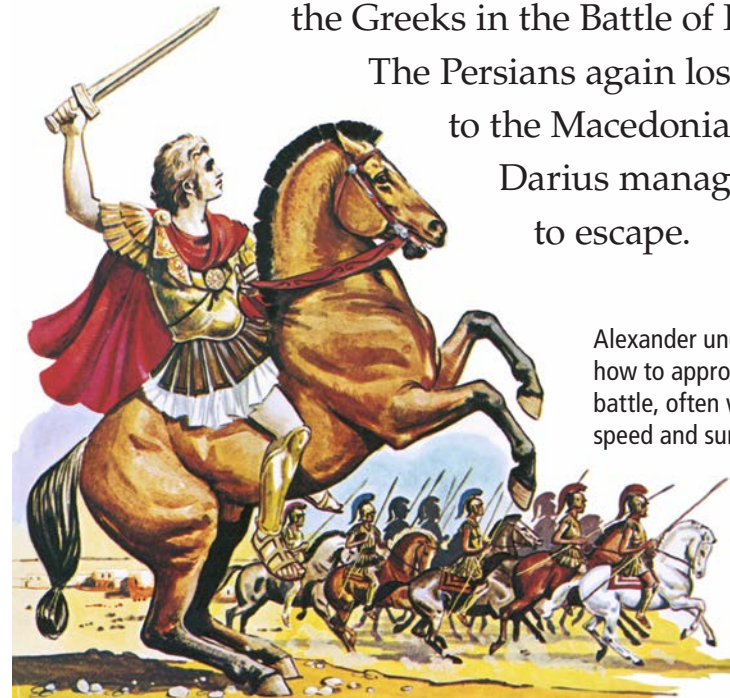
As soon as he became king, Alexander called on his father's army for support. Persia was Greece's long-time enemy and had taken Greek land in Asia Minor. Like Philip, Alexander wanted to rule Persia and more. Many of the Greek city-states supported Alexander, but others were not sure about the young king and his grand ideas. The states had the power to keep Alexander from ruling Greece and could also ruin his plans in Asia. Alexander used force to maintain rule and silence people who opposed him. A year after becoming king, he set off for Asia Minor.



When Alexander arrived in Asia Minor in 334 BC, he threw his spear into the ground and claimed the land. Soon after, the Macedonians fought the Persians in a battle at the Granicus River. Both armies were well trained on horseback and on foot. The Persians, however, fell quickly to the speed and power of the Macedonians. Alexander and his men moved on.

Next, Alexander and his army freed Greek cities along the Aegean Sea. Darius III, the king of Persia, went to fight Alexander and the Greeks in the Battle of Issus.

The Persians again lost to the Macedonians. Darius managed to escape.



Alexander traveled south to stop Persian ships by taking control of cities along the Mediterranean Sea. Some fought back, but the Macedonians' strength and skill **dominated**.

In 332 BC, Alexander marched south into Egypt. The Persian leader there gave Alexander control. Alexander gave Egyptians government positions. He permitted their religion. The Egyptians welcomed him. Alexander decided to move farther into Asia, east of Asia Minor.

In what is Iraq today, the final battle with the Persians took place in 331 BC. Darius again fled the battlefield after losing to the Macedonians. Now Alexander ruled the Persian Empire. He traveled through Persia trying to find Darius. Before Alexander could find him, however, Darius was killed by a local leader.

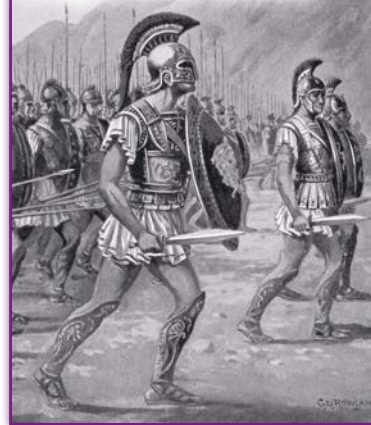
A stone carving depicts Alexander on his horse in the Battle of Issus.



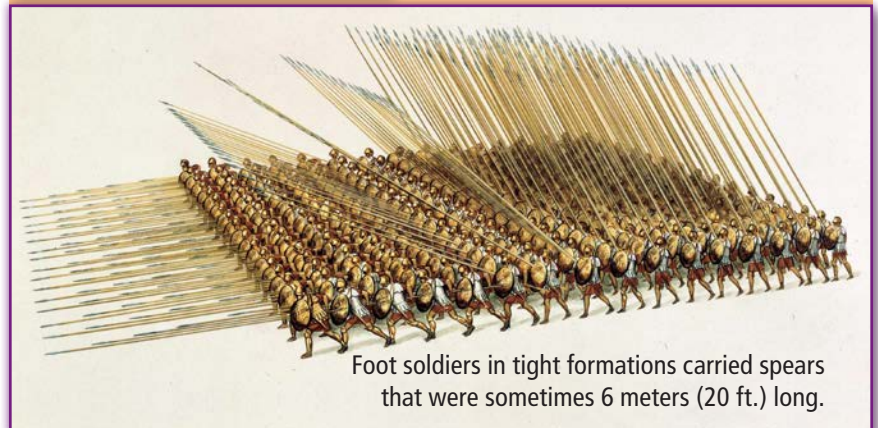
As Alexander gained control of more land and people, he started following Persian customs and asked his men to do the same. He began to demand that the Macedonians bow to him as the Persians did. Many Macedonians did not like Alexander's new ways.

Alexander's Army

A Greek soldier with a knife, called a *dagger*, helmet, and shield.



Alexander took over his father's army when he became king. The army's strength in battle came in part from fighting in a tight rectangular formation. The generals who had fought with Philip helped Alexander, and his leadership skill on the battlefield was outstanding. He seemed to know what his enemies would do, and he knew exactly when and where to attack.



Foot soldiers in tight formations carried spears that were sometimes 6 meters (20 ft.) long.

Alexander the Great built the biggest empire Europe had known, including land in Greece, Asia, and Africa.



The Macedonian army struggled in 326 BC in the land they called India (Afghanistan and Pakistan now) as they moved farther east. After winning a difficult battle, Alexander continued on through India. He was badly injured along the way but managed to recover. Alexander pushed his men to keep moving, even though it caused them great danger.

After fighting for nearly ten years, many of Alexander's men were tired and wanted to go home. They finally convinced him to turn around. They made it to Babylon in 323 BC. However, Alexander came down with a fever, and in June of that year, Alexander the Great died, just before he turned thirty-three.

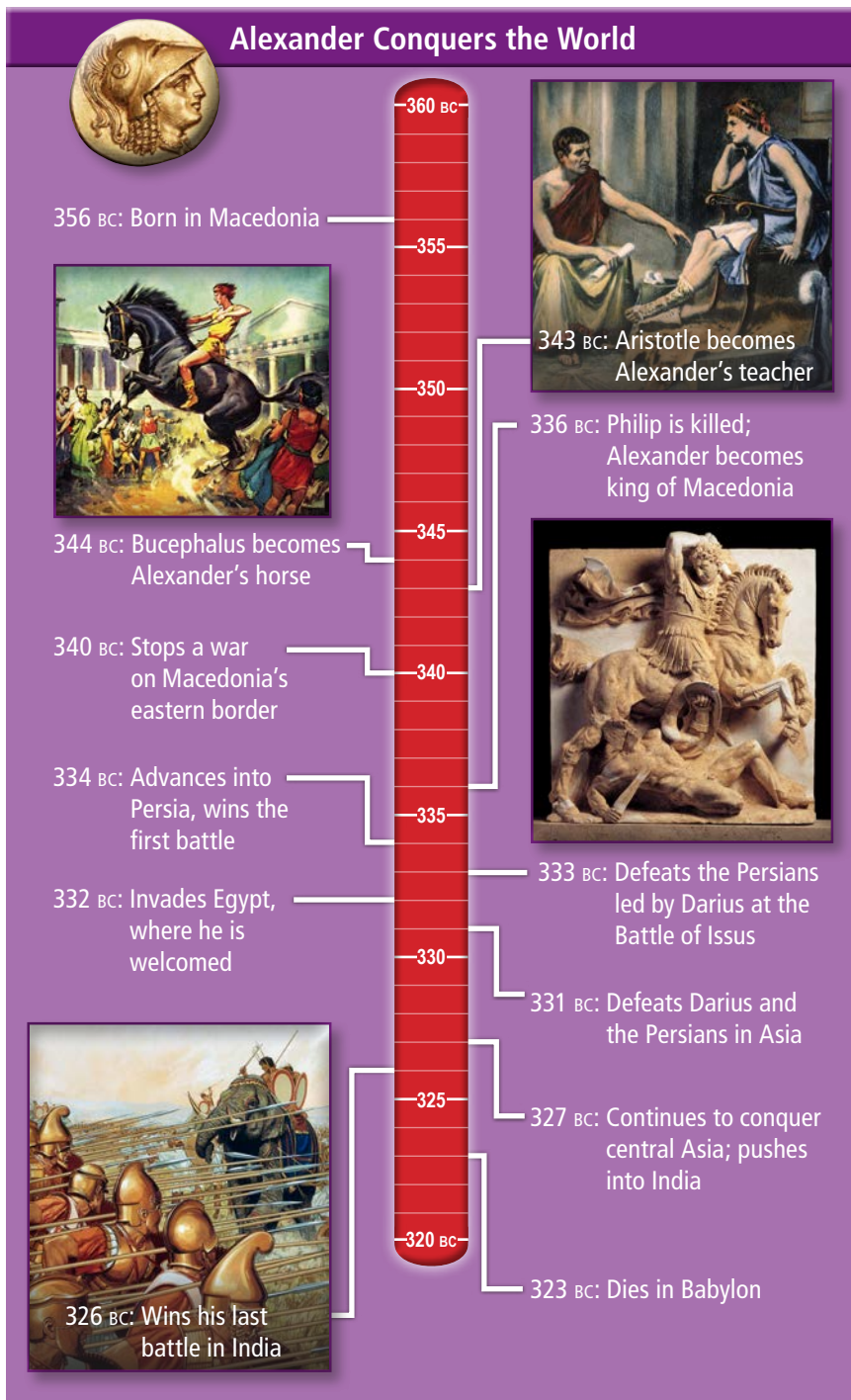
The Life of Alexander the Great

Alexander's empire included parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa. His life was not just about taking control of land and ruling people. Perhaps because of his early education, he learned the traditions of his new empire, and in turn, he and the Macedonians spread Greek culture in new lands.

Alexander became a role model for the rulers and explorers who followed. He opened doors to new places and helped create an exchange of new ideas.



Historians think Alexander's horse, Bucephalus, died in 326 BC after a battle in India.



Glossary

city-states (<i>n.</i>)	cities or urban areas that act as independent countries (p. 5)
claim (<i>v.</i>)	to say that something is one's right or property (p. 4)
control (<i>n.</i>)	the power to influence or restrict a situation or someone's behavior; the ability or power to manage an object (p. 5)
dominated (<i>v.</i>)	had continuing power or a commanding presence over (p. 11)
empire (<i>n.</i>)	a collection of nations or people ruled by one person or government (p. 4)
explore (<i>v.</i>)	to observe and learn about an area by traveling over or through it (p. 4)
intelligence (<i>n.</i>)	the ability to learn and understand (p. 7)
javelins (<i>n.</i>)	long spears thrown for sport, in hunting, or in war (p. 7)
responsibilities (<i>n.</i>)	things a person is supposed or expected to take care of (p. 8)