

## Section

# 3

# Alexander the Great

## Guide to Reading



### History Social Science Standards

**WH.6.4** Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the early civilizations of Ancient Greece.

### Looking Back, Looking Ahead

In Section 2, you learned that the Greek philosopher Aristotle was also a teacher. The king of Macedonia admired Greek culture and hired Aristotle to tutor his son, Alexander. Years later, his son would take control of the Greek world.

### Focusing on the Main Ideas

- Philip II of Macedonia united the Greek states. (page 399)
- Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire and spread Greek culture throughout southwest Asia. (page 400)

### Locating Places

**Macedonia** (MA•suh•DOH•nee•uh)

**Chaeronea** (KEHR•uh•NEE•uh)

**Syria** (SIHR•ee•uh)

**Alexandria** (A•lih•g•ZAN•dree•uh)

### Meeting People

**Philip II**

**Alexander the Great**

### Content Vocabulary

**legacy** (LEH•guh•see)

**Hellenistic Era** (HEH•luh•NIHS•tihk)

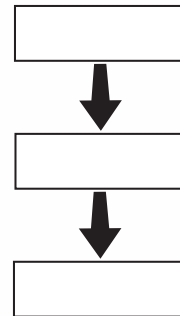
### Academic Vocabulary

**achieve** (uh•CHEEV)

**military** (MIH•luh•TEHR•ee)

### Reading Strategy

**Sequencing** Create a diagram like the one below to track the achievements of Alexander the Great.



## Where & When?



360 B.C.

359 B.C.

Philip II becomes king of Macedonia

340 B.C.

331 B.C.

Alexander defeats Darius at Gaugamela

320 B.C.

323 B.C.

Alexander dies



**WH6.4** Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the early civilizations of Ancient Greece.

**WH6.4.7** Trace the rise of Alexander the Great and the spread of Greek culture eastward and into Egypt.

## Macedonia Attacks Greece

**Main Idea** Philip II of Macedonia united the Greek states.

**Reading Connection** Have you ever wanted something because your neighbor had it? Read to find what the king of Macedonia wanted from his neighbors, the Greeks.

**Macedonia** (MA • suh • DOH • nee • uh) lay north of Greece. The Macedonians raised sheep and horses and grew crops in their river valleys. They were a warrior people who fought on horseback. The Greeks looked down on them, but by 400 B.C., Macedonia had become a powerful kingdom.

**A Plan to Win Greece** In 359 B.C. **Philip II** rose to the throne in Macedonia. Philip had lived in Greece as a young man. He admired everything about the Greeks—their art,

their ideas, and their armies. Although Macedonia was influenced by Greek ideas, Philip wanted to make his kingdom strong enough to defeat the mighty Persian Empire. In order to **achieve** this goal, Philip needed to unite the Greek city-states with his own kingdom.

Philip trained a vast army of foot soldiers to fight like the Greeks. He took over the city-states one by one. He took some city-states by force and bribed the leaders of others to surrender. Some united with his kingdom voluntarily.

Demosthenes (dih • MAHS • thuh • NEEZ) was a lawyer and one of Athens's great public speakers. He gave several powerful speeches warning Athenians that Philip was a threat to Greek freedom. He urged Athens and other city-states to join together to fight the Macedonians.

## Primary Source

### Demosthenes' Warning

As King Philip II of Macedonia became more powerful, he began to take part in the affairs of Greece. Demosthenes realized that Macedonia's powerful army would eventually be a threat to Greece. He tried to warn the Greeks to take action.

"Remember only that Philip is our enemy, that he has long been robbing and insulting us, that wherever we have expected aid from others we have found hostility, that the future depends on ourselves, and that unless we are willing to fight him there we shall perhaps be forced to fight here. . . . You need not speculate [guess] about the future except to assure yourselves that it will be disastrous unless you face the facts and are willing to do your duty."

—Demosthenes, "The First Philippic" in *Orations of Demosthenes*

▼ Demosthenes



### DBQ Document-Based Question

Which line of Demosthenes' speech tells what he thinks will happen if the Greeks ignore Philip?



However, by the time the Greeks saw the danger, it was too late. The Peloponnesian War had left the Greeks weak and divided. In many Greek city-states, the population had declined after the Peloponnesian War. Fighting had destroyed many farms and left people with no way to earn a living. As a result, thousands of young Greeks left Greece to join the Persian army. Many who stayed behind began fighting among themselves. The city-states grew weaker.

Although the Athenians joined some other Greek states to fight Philip's army, they could not stop the invasion. In 338 B.C. the Macedonians crushed the Greek allies at the Battle of **Chaeronea** (KEHR•uh•NEE•uh) near Thebes. Philip now controlled most of Greece.

**Reading Check Summarize** Why did Philip II invade Greece?

## Alexander Builds an Empire

**Main Idea** Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire and spread Greek culture throughout southwest Asia.

**Reading Connection** What will you be doing at age 20? Read to learn what Philip's son Alexander achieved.

Philip planned to conquer the Persian Empire with the Greeks' help. Before Philip could carry out his plan, however, he was murdered. As a result, the invasion of Asia fell to his son.

Alexander was only 20 when he became king of Macedonia. Philip had carefully trained his son for leadership. While still a boy, Alexander often went with his father to the battlefield. At age 16 he rose to commander in the Macedonian army. After his

NATIONAL  
GEOGRAPHIC

### Alexander's Empire 323 B.C.



#### Using Geography Skills

1. **Location** Near what river was the Battle of Gaugamela fought?
2. **Movement** What modern countries make up the eastern borders of the empire?

Find NGS online map resources @  
[www.nationalgeographic.com/maps](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/maps)

#### The Region Today





father's death, Alexander was ready to fulfill his father's dream—the invasion of the Persian Empire.

**What Did Alexander Conquer?** In the spring of 334 B.C., Alexander invaded Asia Minor with about 37,000 foot soldiers. He also took along 5,000 mounted warriors. With Alexander at their head, the cavalry destroyed the forces of the local Persian satraps at the Battle of Granicus.

By the next year, Alexander had freed the Greek cities in Asia Minor from Persian rule and defeated a large Persian army at Issus. He then turned south. By the winter of 332 B.C., he had captured **Syria** (SIHR•ee•uh) and Egypt. Then he built the city of **Alexandria** (A•lihng•ZAN•dree•uh) in Egypt as a center of business and trade. The city became one of the most important cities in the ancient world.

In 331 B.C. Alexander headed east and defeated the Persians at Gaugamela, near Babylon. After this victory, his army easily overran the rest of the Persian Empire. However, Alexander did not stop at Persia. Over the next three years, he marched east as far as modern Pakistan. In 326 B.C. he crossed the Indus River and entered India. There he fought a number of bloody battles. Weary of continuous war, his soldiers refused to go farther. Alexander agreed to lead them home.

On the return march, the troops crossed a desert in what is now southern Iran. Heat and thirst killed thousands of soldiers. At one point, a group of soldiers found a little water and scooped it up in a helmet. Then they offered the water to Alexander. According to a Greek historian, Alexander, “in full view of his troops, poured the water on the ground. So extraordinary was the effect of this action that the water wasted by

Alexander was as good as a drink for every man in the army.”

In 323 B.C. Alexander returned to Babylon. He wanted to plan an invasion of southern Arabia but was very tired and weak from wounds. He came down with a bad fever. Ten days later he was dead at age 32.

**Alexander's Legacy** Alexander was a great **military** leader. He was brave and even reckless. He often rode into battle ahead of his men and risked his own life. He inspired his armies to march into unknown lands and risk their lives in difficult situations.

The key to Alexander's courage may have been his childhood education. Alexander kept a copy of the *Iliad* under his pillow. Most likely his inspiration was Homer's warrior-hero Achilles. In the end, Alexander's reputation outstripped even Achilles', and today he is called **Alexander the Great**.

### Alexander the Great



▲ This carving of Alexander the Great on his horse decorated the side of a tomb. **Was Alexander able to fulfill his plans of conquest? Explain.**

A **legacy** (LEH•guh•see) is what a person leaves behind when he or she dies. Alexander's skill and daring created his legacy. He helped extend Greek and Macedonian rule over a vast region. At the same time, he and his armies spread Greek art, ideas, language, and architecture wherever they went in southwest Asia and northern Africa. Greeks, in turn, brought new ideas back from Asia and Africa.

Alexander's conquests marked the beginning of the **Hellenistic Era** (HEH•luh•NIHS•tihk). The word *Hellenistic* comes from a Greek word meaning "like the Greeks." It refers to a time when the Greek language and Greek ideas spread to the non-Greek people of southwest Asia.

**The Empire Breaks Apart** Alexander the Great planned to unite Macedonians, Greeks, and Persians in his new empire. He used Persians as officials and encouraged his soldiers to marry Asian women. After Alexander died, however, his generals fought one another for power. As a result, the empire that Alexander had created fell apart. Four kingdoms took its place: Macedonia, Pergamum (PUHR•guh•muhm), Egypt, and the Seleucid Empire (suh•LOO•suhd). Look at the map on page 403 to see where these kingdoms were located.

All government business in the Hellenistic kingdoms was conducted in the Greek language. Only those Asians and Egyptians who spoke Greek could apply

(l)Yan Arthus-Bertrand/CORBIS, (r)Archives Charmel/Bridgeman Art Library

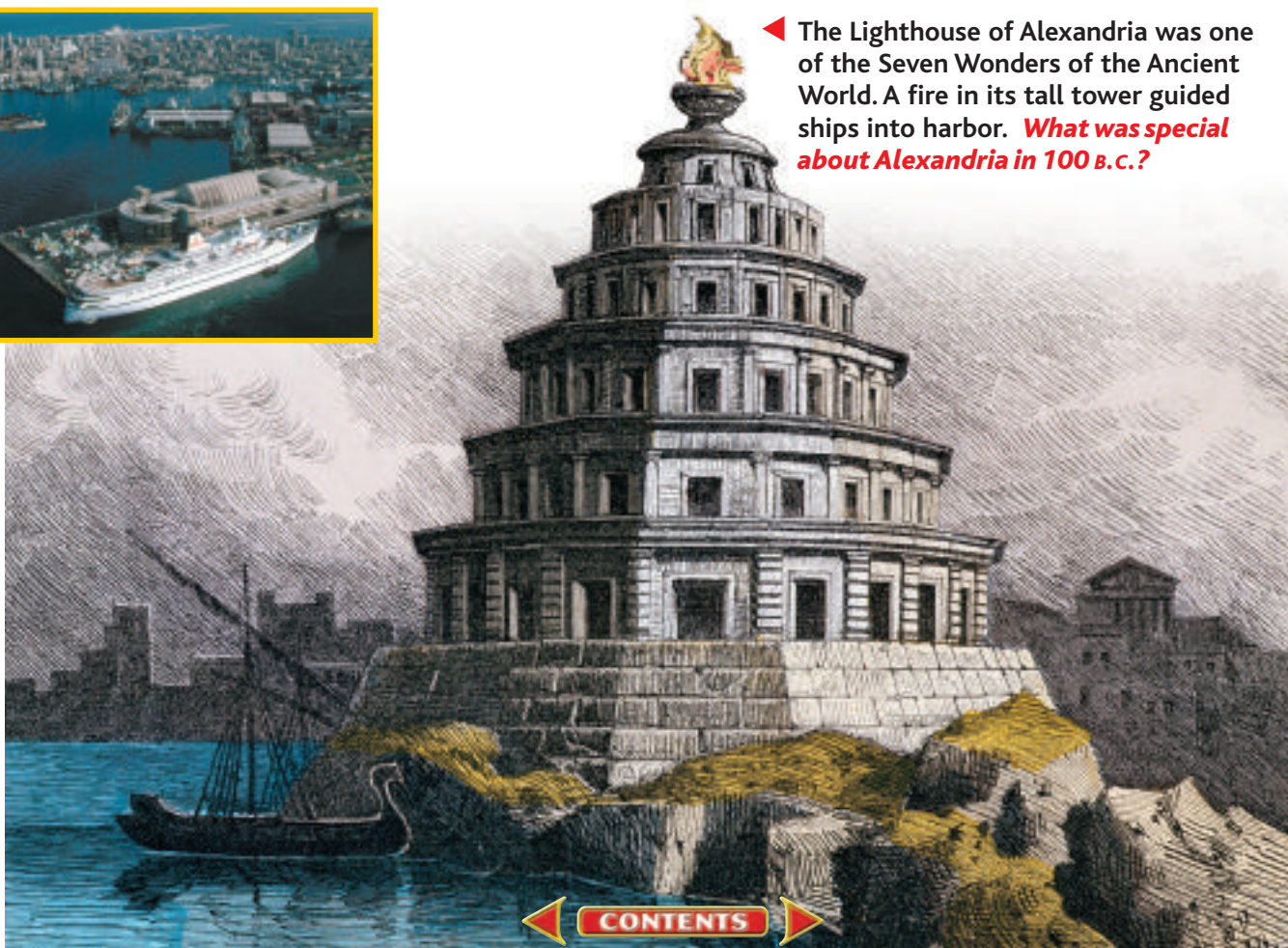
## Alexandria, Egypt



### ▼ Modern Alexandria



◀ The Lighthouse of Alexandria was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. A fire in its tall tower guided ships into harbor. **What was special about Alexandria in 100 B.C.?**





for government posts. The kings preferred to give the jobs to Greeks and Macedonians. In this way, Greeks managed to stay in control of the governments.

By 100 B.C., the largest city in the Mediterranean world was Alexandria, which Alexander had founded in Egypt. In addition, the Hellenistic kings created many new cities and military settlements.

These new Greek communities needed architects, engineers, philosophers, artisans, and artists. For this reason, Hellenistic rulers encouraged Greeks and Macedonians to settle in southwest Asia. These colonists provided new recruits for the army and a pool of government officials. They helped spread Greek culture into Egypt and as far east as modern-day Afghanistan and India.

**Reading Check** **Explain** What was Alexander's legacy?



### Using Geography Skills

- 1. Movement** Which kingdom appears to have had the most territory?
- 2. Location** Which kingdoms were at least partially located in Asia?

## Section 3 Review

### Reading Summary

#### Review the Main Ideas

- Following the Battle of Chaeronea in 338 B.C., King Philip of Macedonia ruled all of Greece.
- Alexander the Great, King Philip's son, conquered an empire that stretched to Africa in the south and India in the east. After Alexander's death, his empire split into several kingdoms.

### What Did You Learn?

- How did Philip II of Macedonia feel about the Greeks?
- What ended Alexander's conquest of India?

#### Critical Thinking

- Analyze** Why was Alexander a good leader? **CA 6RC2.0**
- Summarize** Draw a table to summarize what you know about each topic. **CA 6RC2.4**

Philip of Macedonia	Alexander the Great	Alexander's Empire After His Death

- Points of View** Why did some Greeks ignore the rise of Macedonia? Who tried to warn them? **CA HR5.**
- The Big Ideas** What changes to Greek civilization did Philip and Alexander bring about through war? **CA HI3.**
- Geography Skills** How many continents did Alexander's empire reach? **CA CS3.**
- Analysis Predicting** How might history be different if Alexander had not died at such a young age? **CA HI4.**

**History online**

**Study Central** Need help understanding the conquests of Alexander the Great? Visit [ca.hss.glencoe.com](http://ca.hss.glencoe.com) and click on Study Central.

# You Decide . . .



**WH6.4.7** Trace the rise of Alexander the Great and the spread of Greek culture eastward and into Egypt.

## Alexander the Great: Villain or Hero?

### Villain

Was Alexander the Great really great? Or was he an evil conqueror? Those who see him as bloodthirsty and cruel give this as evidence against Alexander. They say he

- destroyed Persepolis
- attacked Tyre, killing 10,000 people and enslaving 30,000
- treated his slaves harshly
- ordered the murder of several close advisers.

Many legends about Alexander have been told. One historian found this account to support the "villain theory."

"The following is my favourite [story] which is found all the way from Turkey to Kazakhstan: Iskander [Alexander] was actually a devil and he had horns. But his hair was long and wavy and the horns were never seen. Only his barbers knew. But he feared they could not keep the secret. So, he killed them when they discovered. His last barber pretended not to notice and kept the secret. Eventually though he could bear it no longer and, as he could tell no one, he ran to a well and called down the well: 'Iskander has horns!' But in the bottom of the well were whispering reeds [used in flutes] and they echoed the story until it went round the whole world."

—Michael Wood,  
"In the Footsteps of  
Alexander the Great"



▲ Alexander the Great (at far left)





▲ Alexander the Great

## Hero

Other historians consider Alexander the Great to be a hero. They claim he brought progress, order, and culture to each new land he conquered. In support of him, they say Alexander

- tried to promote learning
- visited all of his wounded men after each battle
- spared the lives of the queen and princess of Persia
- built new cities where others had been destroyed.

Arrian, a Greek historian who lived in the A.D. 100s, wrote about Alexander this way:

"For my own part, I think there was at that time no race of men, no city, nor even a single individual to whom Alexander's name and fame had not penetrated. For this reason it seems to me that a hero totally unlike any other human being could not have been born without the agency [help] of the deity [gods]."

—Arrian, *The Anabasis of Alexander*

On two points all historians agree: Alexander was a brilliant general and he was a brave fighter. He once boasted to his men:

"For there is no part of my body, in front at any rate, remaining free from wounds; nor is there any kind of weapon used either for close combat or for hurling at the enemy, the traces of which I do not bear on my person. For I have been wounded with the sword in close fight, I have been shot with arrows, and I have been struck with missiles projected from engines of war; and though oftentimes I have been hit with stones and bolts of wood for the sake of your lives, your glory, and your wealth, I am still leading you as conquerors over all the land and sea, all rivers, mountains, and plains. I have celebrated your weddings with my own, and the children of many of you will be akin to my children."

—Arrian, *The Anabasis of Alexander*

### You Be the Historian

#### DBQ Document-Based Questions

1. Why do some historians view Alexander as a villain? **CA HR5.**
2. Why do others view him as a hero? **CA HR5.**
3. Was Alexander wicked or heroic? Take the role of a historian. Write a persuasive essay that explains how you see Alexander the Great. Be sure to use facts to support your position. **CA 6WA2.5**