

## Alexander the Great

### Teaching Idea

**Make an overhead of Instructional Master 15, *Alexander the Great's Empire*. It is not important that children learn the particulars of Alexander's conquest, only the extent of his empire north, south, east, and west.**

**Using the map overhead also provides another context for children to learn the location and names of certain geographical features. You can also use the map of Alexander's conquests to review civilizations studied earlier, many of which Alexander conquered or invaded, e.g., Egypt, Mesopotamia, India.**

Phillip II was king of Macedonia, a region north of Greece. At the time he was king, from 359 BCE to 336 BCE, the Persian Empire was still a major threat to the Greek city-states. Phillip was determined to conquer the Greek city-states and combine their forces with his Macedonians. He believed he would then be strong enough to defeat the Persians. Before Phillip could fully realize his plan, he was assassinated. His son, the 20-year-old Alexander, ascended the throne.

This was the same Alexander who had been tutored by Aristotle. The young man had never learned to pursue Aristotle's golden mean. He did everything to the extreme. But his studies with Aristotle did affect him in at least one important way. Under Aristotle's tutelage he had studied Homer's epic poem *The Iliad*, with its great warrior-hero Achilles. Alexander carried a copy of *The Iliad* with him for the rest of his life, and the poem seems to have inspired him to become a great warrior-hero in his own right.


Phillip had succeeded in conquering the Greeks. Now his son Alexander packed his copy of *The Iliad* and led his joint Macedonian and Greek army into Asia Minor. Alexander soon proved himself a brilliant warrior and stunning tactician. Leading from the front lines of any battle, he took the greatest risks himself and galvanized his troops. His forces defeated the Persians in Asia Minor, and then moved farther into Persian territory. At Issus, they defeated Darius, the Persian emperor. Alexander then turned his attention west to Phoenicia and Egypt, seizing power by force. Once these areas were subdued, Alexander moved back through the former Persian Empire fighting more battles and seizing more territory, including Mesopotamia, until his forces reached the Indus River in India.

As Alexander won battles, his ego grew and grew. He named many cities after himself. (Alexandria in Egypt would become the most important.) He also began to adopt the Persian customs of kingship. Forcing his men to treat him as Persian subjects treated their kings, Alexander made supplicants lie prostrate on the ground before him. Greeks did not believe in these sorts of customs for men, believing that it was too subservient. Alexander's troops were not pleased, and he was obliged to discontinue the practice.

Alexander continued his wars in the east until, during the monsoon season, with his troops poorly supplied, he and his men encountered the horror of war

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Alexander the Great's Empire**



Use the information shown on the map to answer the questions.

1. What does the shaded area stand for on the map?  
The empire of Alexander the Great
2. Alexander's empire included parts of which continents?  
Europe, Africa, and Asia

Purpose: To read and interpret a map of the regions comprising the empire of Alexander the Great.  
Master 15

Grade 2: History & Geography

**Use Instructional Master 15.**



elephants expertly trained in India. The Greeks did not lose, but Alexander's men did lose heart. They would fight no more. It was said that when Alexander realized he must turn back, he broke down in tears, sobbing that for him there were no more worlds to conquer. Nevertheless, Alexander turned westward. On his return through Babylon in 323 BCE, the great conqueror became ill after an extended period of particularly heavy drinking. Alexander died at age 33, having gone well beyond his father's dream, conquering much of the known world.

Aristotle's influence was apparent in Alexander's attitude toward the people he conquered. He did more than fight wars and seize territory. Alexander was also very interested in spreading Greek culture among the peoples he ruled, and blending Greek, Persian, Indian, and Egyptian customs and institutions. Greek scholars, artists, government officials, and merchants followed Alexander's army. In Egypt, he founded the city of Alexandria, which became a center of Hellenistic learning. *Hellenism* is the name given to the merging of Greek and Middle Eastern cultures.