

Alexander the Great

Alexander the Great was prince of Macedonia, Greece. He was the son of King Philip II. When he was 20 years old he became king of Macedonia and also became one of the greatest conquerors in the entire world. He was a student of Aristotle and learned much from the great philosopher. His first invasion was set for Persia, to finish what his father had planned. Alexander was victorious against Persia and many other countries. He won victory after victory from Greece to India. During his military career, Alexander never lost a battle creating the largest empire the world had ever seen.

Alexander's Achievements

Alexander's most lasting achievement was the spread of Greek culture. Alexander's conquests had linked a vast land empire. Alexander founded many new cities most of them named after him. This gradually blended eastern and western cultures creating a Hellenistic civilization, which combined aspects from Greek, Egyptian, Indian and Persian cultures. At the very heart of the Hellenistic world lay the city of Alexandria, Egypt. The city became the cultural learning center of the world, where many began to study medicine, philosophy, science, mathematics, and many other educational areas. The birth of the Hellenistic culture influenced many civilizations that followed, most notably Rome.

Alexander the Drunk

Historians believe that there were other sides to Alexander the Great that were left out of many history books. It is believed that Alexander underwent an alcohol-induced metamorphosis later in life. "During the last seven years of his life, Alexander became increasingly unpredictable, sporadically violent, and suspicious of friends as well as enemies."

Alexander's drunken rages affected both his political life and his private life. One example of this occurred at a party; his friend Cleitus started a war of words with Alexander. Cleitus became angry at Alexander and claimed that Alexander owed his fame and power to his father Philip. Cleitus added that he himself had saved Alexander's life in battle, a truism that he spoke to often for Alexander's liking. Alexander became enraged and "snatched a pike from one of his bodyguards, and was at once struck dead with the pike." This total display of lack of control occurred frequently in the late years of Alexander's life.

Alexander's Misdeeds

Although the life of Alexander is filled with military victories, deeds and other achievements, his wrong-doings and less glorious exploits are also worth mentioning. Many say that, "... if circumstances demanded it he could (and did) order the slaughter of the enemy and even of its prisoners, destroy an entire city and sell its population into slavery, or order the murder of those who had turned against him, even if they were his lifelong friends."

Some of the incidents, such as the massacre of the Thebans and the slaughter of the Malli, would be labeled atrocities by today's standards, while the killing of, for example, Cleitus, Parmenion and Eurydice's infant son, would be considered personal crimes. Although he was a great leader, the killing and slaughter seem hard to justify.

Directions: Based on the readings on Alexander the Great, list evidence that supports whether Alexander should be remembered as a good leader or a bad leader.

Alexander's Good Qualities	Alexander's Bad Qualities

Alexander the Great

Philip of Macedonia

The end of the Peloponnesian War found Sparta and Athens in decline. The prevailing conditions showed that if Greece and its city-states were united under one strong leader it would be able to find its lost glory and cope with the Persian threat.

The first one to understand this fact was Philip of Macedonia, who then managed to realize this union and become the leader of all of Greece. He followed a very clever policy; threatening and fighting when judging it necessary, making peace and arranging agreements or even making his enemies fight one another through clever political maneuvering. He did this and also organized his state and army; he minted new coins, and invented new political strategies. He proved that he was one of the brightest politicians the world had ever seen.

1. What were some achievements of Philip of Macedonia?
2. Why was he so successful?

Alexander the Great

Alexander was prince of Macedonia, Greece. He was the son of King Philip who dreamed of conquering a massive empire. While at the height of his power Philip was assassinated at his daughters wedding, this gave the throne to Alexander.

Alexander was only twenty years old when he became one of the world's greatest generals and leaders. He was a student of the Greek philosopher Aristotle and loved learning and the arts. He was a strong warrior like his father and he planned to prove his power by invading Persia. At this time Darius III was very weak. Alexander marched in with his troops and received his first victory against Persia. From there he moved on from victory to victory including areas in Greece, Egypt and India.

Alexander was a shrewd politician whose power-hungry megalomania led him on an unending search for conquest and glory. He used whatever means necessary and exploited anyone and anything to reach his goals. While doing so, however, he remained very charismatic and noble, as this would insure support for the continuation of his plans. While some have argued that Alexander was motivated by higher principles, in actuality he was doing whatever was necessary to win support and increase his power base.

He conquered the East by crossing the Hindu Kush Mountains into India. He faced enemies like never before, soldiers perched on elephants and fierce warriors. Alexander overcame these odds and never lost a battle in his military career. However, at the age of 33 he was stricken with a deadly fever that killed him. After his death his empire was divided among his strongest generals, but no one was strong enough to maintain the empire. His empire soon crumbled, but his journey across the world had unleashed changes that would ripple across the Mediterranean and the Middle East for centuries.

1. Discuss some characteristics of Alexander the Great.
2. How did he follow in his father's footsteps?

