



Alexander the Great, Part II

12_A

Introducing the Read-Aloud

10 minutes

What Have We Already Learned?

Use images 11A-1 through 11A-7 to review what students learned in the previous read-aloud about Alexander the Great's early life. You may wish to ask the following questions:

- What was Alexander like as a child?
- Which philosopher came to teach Alexander?
- How did Alexander solve the problem of the wild horse Bucephalus, and tame him?
- What was Alexander like as a leader and warrior?

Making Predictions About the Read-Aloud

Reread the last paragraph from "Alexander the Great, Part I": "But Greece was not enough for the ambitious king. He put one of his trusted advisors in charge of Greece and announced, 'It is time to end the Persian threat once and for all and to call Persia my own.' With that, Alexander set out on his greatest adventure." Ask the students to predict what they think Alexander's greatest adventure will be and whether Alexander will be successful.

Purpose for Listening

Tell students to listen carefully to find out whether or not their predictions are correct.



Alexander the Great, Part II

◀ Show image 12A-1: Alexander motioning his army forward

1 [On Poster 1, show the route from Macedonia to the Hellespont channel.] Who remembers who else crossed this same channel, but in the opposite direction on foot by using a ship bridge? (Xerxes and the Persian soldiers)

2 or threw with great force

3 Why do you think it was so important to King Alexander that he be remembered this way?



◀ Show image 12A-2: Greek citizens cheering Alexander's army

King Alexander of Macedonia led his Greek soldiers on foot across Europe and then by ship across the channel of water that separated Europe from Asia.¹ As the boats approached the far shore, Alexander **flung**² his spear so that it landed point-first in Asian soil. Stepping from his boat, he freed the spear and told his cheering men, “We will conquer Asia with our spears!”

Leading the army down the coast of the Aegean Sea, he stopped at the site of ancient Troy. Here, nine centuries before, the Greeks had fought a famous war, the story of which had been told in a well-known book called *The Iliad* (ILL-ee-ud). Since boyhood, Alexander had set a goal for himself: “I want people to remember me forever as a great hero, just as we remember Achilles (uh-KILL-ees), the greatest hero in *The Iliad*,” he said. That goal of undying fame, more than anything else, would drive Alexander onward through his many adventures.³

As Alexander continued down the Aegean coast, citizens of Greek city-states that had developed in Asia welcomed Alexander’s army. “Alexander will free us from Persian rule!” the people cheered. “We will live as free Greeks once more.”

4 Do you think this was true?

Alexander told them, “Yes, we will free you.”⁴ Yet, once his army took over a city or a nation, Alexander never gave up his control. He was determined to set the record for ruling the greatest empire in history, and he didn’t think he could do that by freeing people and places he had conquered.⁵

5 How do you think the Greek people felt about King Alexander after they realized he wasn’t going to let them live freely? Do you think they continued to cheer for him?



← **Show image 12A-3: Greek army charging across river toward Persian army**

6 If the army was enormous, was it large or small?

7 How do you think King Alexander defeated such an enormous army?

Soon Alexander's soldiers found themselves facing an enormous Persian army sent by the Persian king.⁶ Between the two armies lay a river. Alexander charged across the river calling, "Follow me!" with his men rushing to keep up. They won the battle.⁷



← **Show image 12A-4: Alexander approaching the Gordian Knot**

8 An invader is someone who enters a country by force in order to conquer it.

9 So did King Alexander actually untie the knot?

Afterward they reached the city of Gordia (GORD-ee-uh), where Alexander was shown the chariot of the ancient founder of the city. This ancient chariot was tied to a pole with a large knot. The elderly priests smiled at the young **invader**.⁸ "Legend says that only he who unties the Gordian knot can rule Asia," the priests said, knowing it would take days or weeks to do so. But with lightning speed, Alexander drew his sword, and in one mighty stroke, sliced the knot in half. "What a pleasant legend," he said, and rode on laughing.⁹



← **Show image 12A-5: Alexander in Egypt, writing to Aristotle**¹⁰

10 What do you see in the picture?

11 [Show on a world map or globe.]

12 or officially announced

13 How do you think Aristotle felt about being able to see some of the plants and animals in faraway Egypt?

Alexander continued on to Egypt, which was also under Persian control.¹¹ He defeated the Persian armies there, and the Egyptians **proclaimed**¹² him pharaoh, or king. While in Egypt, and all through his travels, he sent samples of local plants and animals to his old teacher, Aristotle, so that the great scientist could examine them.¹³ Alexander also tried to answer a question the wise man had long hoped to figure out: why does the Nile River flood in the spring?

"I cannot prove it without following the river all the way to its beginnings," Alexander wrote, "and this I have no time to do. But after talking with the most educated Egyptians, I believe that during each spring, rains fill the lakes in the mountains of northern Africa. The lakes overflow into the Nile, which carries the water down to the flatlands of Egypt." He was right, and Aristotle sent a letter of thanks.¹⁴

14 [You may wish to remind students of the importance of flooding rivers for farming in ancient civilizations.]



← **Show image 12A-6: Alexander victorious over the Persians**

By the time the letter reached Alexander, however, he was back in Persia, winning battle after battle. At one of these battles, the Persians had many more soldiers than Alexander commanded. The Persian king felt so sure of victory that he left his family and a good deal of his treasure in a nearby city. When Alexander won the fight, he marched into that city and took the king's treasure for himself and his men. After several more victories, Alexander at last defeated the Persians for good and crowned himself king of Asia.¹⁵

15 Were your predictions correct?



← **Show image 12A-7: Alexander's wedding to Persian princess**

As he continually fought these wars, Alexander insisted that his goal was to win glory for himself and his troops and to prove no one else was stronger in force.¹⁶ After his success, Alexander married off thousands of his Greek soldiers to Persian women; he also took Persian soldiers into his army so that they could learn Greek ideas from his soldiers. He and his lifelong best friend even married two of the king of Persia's daughters in a double wedding ceremony. "We will unite all of our empire into one great nation," Alexander proclaimed.¹⁷

16 Do you think this was a good goal to have?

17 What does *proclaimed* mean? What did Alexander proclaim?

18 *Attention* means close observation or thought. Do you think this lack of attention was helpful or hurtful to Alexander's rule?

19 What does *grand* mean?

Alexander was so busy trying to conquer more and more places that he was not able to give much **attention** to the places he had already taken over.¹⁸ Instead, he left behind generals he trusted to rule for him or let the kings he had conquered continue to run their countries while reporting to him. Then Alexander moved on. Without more attention on his part, his grand plan never completely succeeded.¹⁹

← **Show image 12A-8: Alexander in India; soldiers facing elephants**

At the same time, Alexander began to claim, "I am one of the gods—for who but a god could do all that I have done?" It was around this time that people began to refer to him as "Alexander the Great." Probably he himself was the first one to say it. Always restless, he was never satisfied that he had done enough in his life.



20 [Show India on a world map or globe.]

21 What do you think this new threat was? Do you think this new threat stopped Alexander's attack on India?

Even conquering Persia did not satisfy him. "We'll continue east to India," he ordered.²⁰ Fighting over great distances and rugged mountains, Alexander's soldiers reached northern India, where they found themselves facing a strong Indian army that featured a terrible new threat.²¹

"What on earth is that thing?" one Macedonian soldier asked another.

"I don't know," replied his friend, "but I've never seen anything so big!"

In fact, the monsters they were facing were elephants, atop which rode Indian soldiers directing the huge beasts to attack and trample their enemies. Alexander ordered to the front of his army spearmen carrying spears twenty-one feet long. He told them, "Do not let those beasts get close enough to reach you!" With their usual confidence in Alexander, his men frightened off the elephants and won the battle.



← **Show image 12A-9: Army asking Alexander to take them home**

22 Why do you think the men refused to obey Alexander?

With northern India under control, Alexander and his army chopped down trees, made great wooden rafts, and rode them down the wide Indus River into central India. But when the soldiers heard that Alexander intended to conquer the rest of India, for the first time they refused to obey him.²² Men who had been with him from the start explained, "We have marched by your side and fought as brothers under your command for thirteen years. We are far from Macedonia. Please, take us home." Alexander could not deny his men this request, so they turned around for home.

23 Do you really think Alexander thought he was a god? Why or why not?

That is when Alexander discovered that he was not a god.²³ At only thirty-three years old, Alexander had lived through enough adventures for a hundred lifetimes, and had worn out the energetic body he had built to such strength as a youngster. He fell ill, still many miles from home.²⁴

24 What do you think is going to happen to Alexander?



← **Show image 12A-10: Alexander, his generals gathered around him**

Alexander lay in his large travel tent. His generals gathered around him, each hoping to become king and rule Alexander's great empire after his death. They asked, "To which of us do you leave your empire?"

He laughed and answered, "To the strongest!" Then he closed his eyes. He had laughed because he knew what would happen next, and he turned out to be right. Fighting for control of his empire, his men would break it into pieces. None of them would match his record as the mightiest conqueror of all.



← **Show image 12A-11: Statue of Alexander the Great**

As a result, he would never be forgotten. He would always be remembered as Alexander the Great.²⁵

25 So did Alexander obtain the undying fame he hoped to achieve?

Discussing the Read-Aloud

15 minutes

Comprehension Questions

10 minutes

1. *Evaluative* Were your predictions about Alexander's greatest adventure correct? Why or why not? (Answers may vary.)
2. *Literal* What was Alexander the Great's goal in life? (to have undying fame as a great hero)
3. *Literal* What large animals confronted Alexander's army in India? (elephants) Did Alexander's army retreat when they saw the elephants? (no)
4. *Inferential* For what accomplishment is Alexander the Great remembered and named? (He created the largest empire in the world during his time.)
5. *Inferential* Who took over Alexander the Great's empire when he died? (Many of the men fought for the position, but no one was able to match Alexander's success as the mightiest conqueror of his time.)

6. *Evaluative* Legend said that only the person who untied the Gordian Knot would rule Asia. What did Alexander do with the Gordian Knot? (He didn't try to untie it but simply used his sword to cut it in half.) Did he go on to rule Asia? (yes) How do you think the priests felt about what he did? (Answers may vary.)
7. *Evaluative* The read-aloud told us that Alexander was too busy trying to conquer more and more places to give much attention to the places he had already taken over. Who taught Alexander the importance of observation, or attention? (Aristotle) Do you think Alexander forgot about the importance of this skill? How did this affect his ability to be a good leader? (Answers may vary.)

[Please continue to model the *Think Pair Share* process for students, as necessary, and scaffold students in their use of the process.]

I am going to ask a question. I will give you a minute to think about the question, and then I will ask you to turn to your neighbor and discuss the question. Finally, I will call on several of you to share what you discussed with your partner.

8. *Evaluative Think Pair Share:* What would you have done if you were Alexander the Great and had already conquered Greece and Persia? Would you have stopped there, or would you have continued conquering foreign lands? (Answers may vary.)
9. After hearing today's read-aloud and questions and answers, do you have any remaining questions? [If time permits, you may wish to allow for individual, group, or class research of the text and/or other resources to answer these remaining questions.]

Word Work: Invader

5 minutes

1. In the read-aloud you heard, “The elderly priests smiled at the young *invader*.”
2. Say the word *invader* with me.
3. An invader is a person who enters a place, such as a country, by force in order to conquer it.
4. Alexander the Great became a famous invader of the Persian Empire.
5. Have you ever heard of someone who was an invader? Try to use the word *invader* when you tell about it. [Ask two or three students. If necessary, guide and/or rephrase the students’ responses: “_____ was an invader.”]
6. What’s the word we’ve been talking about? What part of speech is the word *invader*?

Use a *Word Parts* activity for follow-up. Directions: The *-er* ending is often added to a word to name the person or thing that does the action. For example, an invader is a person who invades; a reader is a person who reads. I will name a person or thing. Think about the word you hear before the *-er* ending to help you name what the person or thing does. Remember to answer in complete sentences.

1. a teacher (A teacher is a person who teaches.)
2. a flyer (A flyer is a person who flies.)
3. a writer (A writer is a person who writes.)
4. a gardener (A gardener is a person who gardens.)
5. a painter (A painter is a person who paints.)



Complete Remainder of the Lesson Later in the Day



Alexander the Great, Part II

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Extensions

20 minutes

Map of Alexander the Great's Empire (Instructional Master 12B-1)

Remind students that Alexander the Great was a famous invader who fought many battles and won many victories that increased the size of his empire. Give each student a copy of Instructional Master 12B-1. Tell students that this map shows the many regions that composed Alexander the Great's empire. Help students interpret the map to answer the following questions:

- What does the shaded area stand for on the map? (the empire of Alexander the Great)
- Alexander's empire included parts of which continents? (Europe, Africa, and Asia)
- Which area of land was larger: the area where the ancient Greek civilization existed, or the area that Alexander the Great conquered? (the area that Alexander the Great conquered) [You may wish to show students Poster 1 and this map to compare the two areas.]

Have students write a complete sentence to answer each question on the worksheet.

Writing a Fictional Narrative: Edit (Instructional Masters 10B-1, 11B-1, 12B-2)

Tell students that together they are going to edit the narrative paragraph you have written as a class. Explain that this means they are going to read the paragraph to check for any mistakes, and to make sure they have said everything they wanted or needed to say. Use Instructional Master 12B-2 as a checklist for students to edit their fictional narratives. This checklist includes the basic items for students to review, such as using punctuation

at the end of each sentence, commas between items in a list, and capital letters at the beginning of each sentence. In addition, the checklist includes additional lines on which you may also include specific writing concepts students are currently learning.

Allow students to share any mistakes they see, what they like about what has been written, and what changes they may suggest. After editing, rewrite the paragraph onto chart paper, a chalkboard, or a whiteboard. Read the final narrative paragraph aloud to the class.