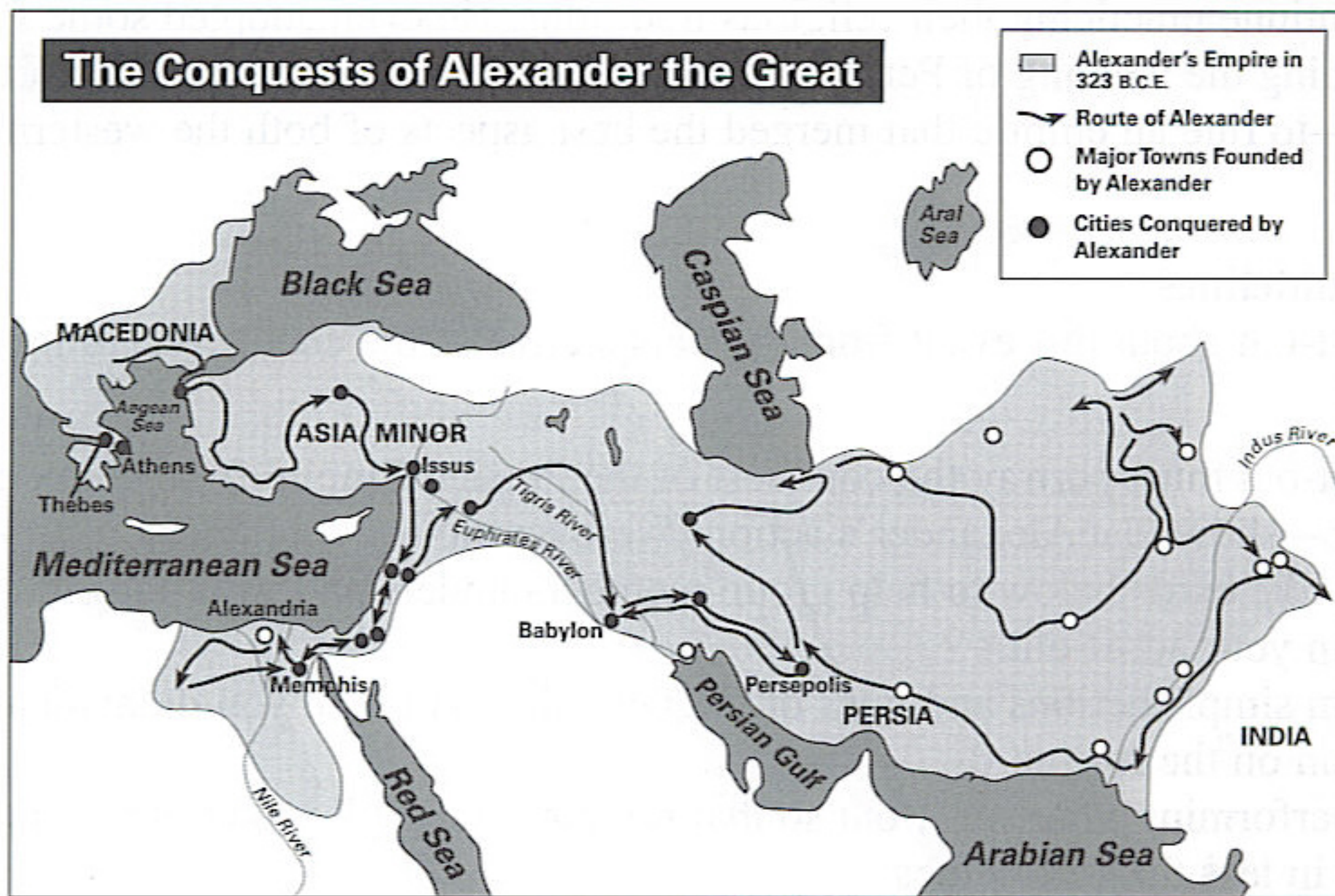


Information About Event C: Alexander in Persia from the Perspective of Conqueror



When Alexander the Great set out for Asia Minor in 334 B.C.E. with 35,000 troops, the Persian Empire was the largest in the world. Its territory stretched thousands of miles, across deserts and mountains, from Egypt to India. It had been the dream of Alexander's father, Philip II, to invade and conquer Persia. As ruler of all of Greece, Philip intended to avenge the destruction the Persians had inflicted upon Greece during the Persian Wars nearly 150 years earlier. In addition, the Persians were a strong rival for control of the profitable trade routes in the eastern Mediterranean. For these reasons—and because he was already thinking of ruling vast new lands—Alexander set out to fulfill his father's dream.

In his many victories against the Persians during the next several years, Alexander showed his military genius time and again. His use of superior tactics and skilled battle strategies helped him defeat Persian forces that sometimes had him outnumbered by two to one. This was especially true at the Battle of Issus (pronounced ISS-uss), a key turning point in Alexander's Persian campaign.

At the Battle of Issus in 333 B.C.E., the Persians—led by King Darius III (pronounced DAHR-ee-yuss)—had more than 70,000 troops. Alexander's forces numbered about 40,000. Prior to the battle, the two armies passed each other through separate mountain passes during the night. When Alexander realized what had happened, he ordered his men to double back. This maneuver trapped the Persian army with its back to the sea, in a "corner" where the northern and eastern Mediterranean coasts meet. Alexander then led a charge with his cavalry. Darius panicked and fled in his chariot, causing much of his army to flee with him. Alexander captured thousands of men and much of the Persian king's riches.

Within three years after the Battle of Issus, Alexander captured and destroyed the Persian capital of Persepolis (pronounced pur-SEP-oh-liss) and claimed the right to rule all of Persia. Yet he showed much respect for the conquered Persians. He appointed many Persian governors in the territories he conquered—governors who would now be loyal to *him*. He allowed many Persians to continue practicing their religious traditions. He even adopted some Persian customs himself, including the wearing of Persian clothing. Each of these actions was part of his ultimate goal—to rule an empire that merged the best aspects of both the western and eastern worlds.

Act-It-Out Guidelines

Create an act-it-out about this event from the perspective of the conqueror, using these guidelines:

1. Your act-it-out must portray the conquest of the Persian Empire from the perspective of the conqueror—show that Alexander’s actions were heroic and tolerant.
2. Study the role cards below to help group members understand what information should be included in your act-it-out.
3. Brainstorm simple actions and lines of dialogue that will help you dramatically convey the information on the role cards.
4. Practice performing your act-it-out so that it incorporates all group members and can be presented in less than 2 minutes.

Role Cards

Alexander: Explain who you are. Boast about how you used superior tactics and skilled battle strategies to defeat larger Persian forces. Tell the class that you burned Persepolis to avenge the Persians for having destroyed so many Greek city-states during the Persian Wars. Explain why your conquest of Persia fulfilled your father’s dream.

Macedonian general: Introduce yourself to the class as Hephæstion (pronounced heh-FES-tee-on), one of Alexander’s trusted generals. Explain how Alexander defeated the Persians at Issus. Tell the class how Darius panicked and fled from the battlefield at Issus.

Macedonian soldier: Introduce yourself to the class as Diodorus (pronounced dy-OD-er-uss), one of Alexander’s soldiers. Describe how Alexander showed great respect for the conquered Persians. Tell the class that to show his respect for Persian culture, Alexander wore Persian clothing.

Persian satrap: Introduce yourself to the class as Mazæus (pronounced mah-ZAY-uss), a Persian *satrap*, or ruler. Explain how Alexander appointed many Persians, such as yourself, to act as governors in the areas he conquered. Tell the class that Alexander allowed many Persians to continue practicing their religious traditions.