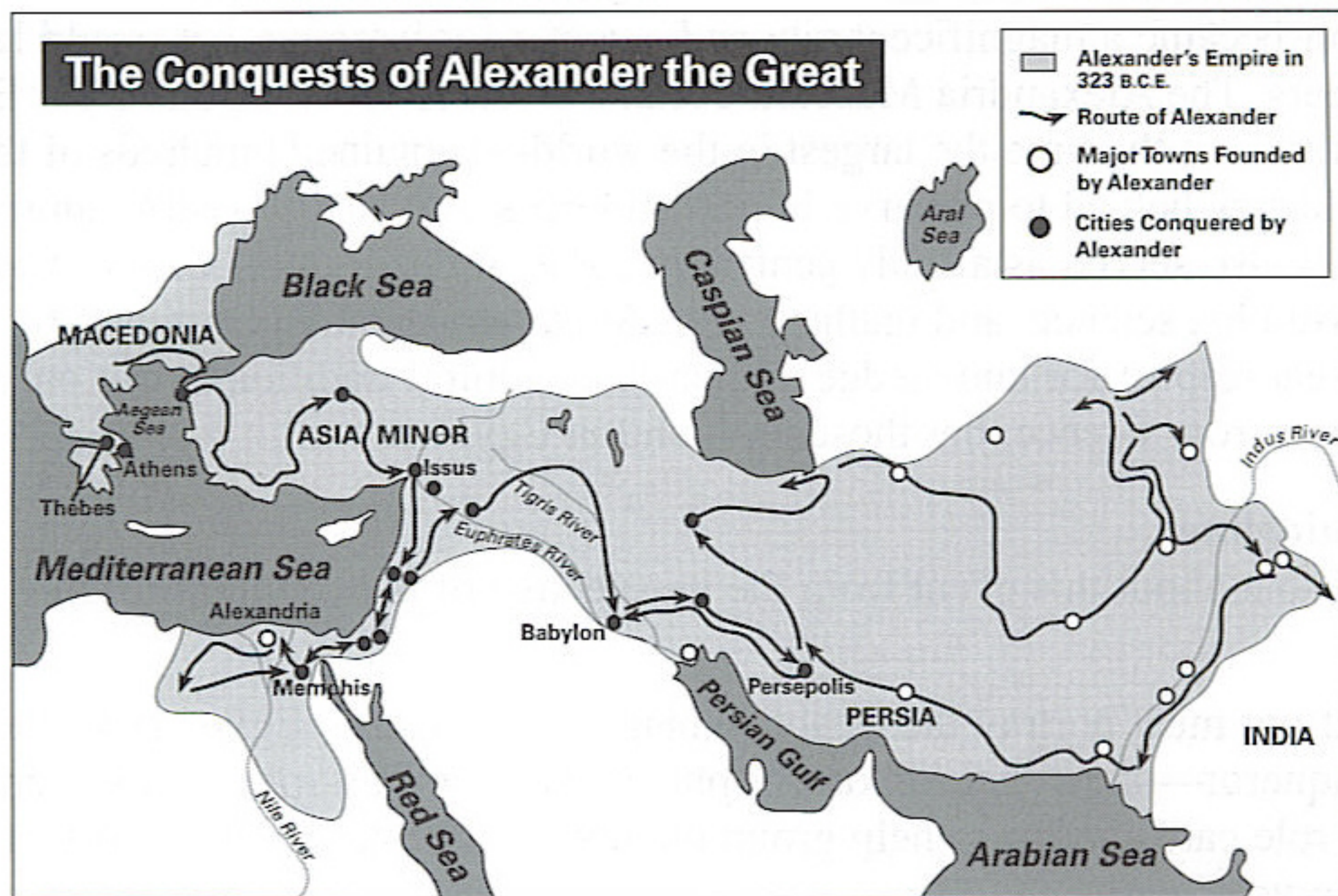


Information About Event B: Alexander in Egypt from the Perspective of Conqueror



After two years in Asia Minor and the Near East, Alexander and his forces arrived in Egypt in 332 B.C.E. For the previous 20 years, the Persians had ruled Egypt, and the Egyptians welcomed Alexander more as a savior than an invader. The Egyptians believed that Alexander would show more respect for their religious practices and cultural traditions than the Persians had done. As a result, Alexander's troops met no resistance when they arrived at the city of Memphis, and the Egyptians treated him as a king, or *pharaoh*. It is believed that he may also have had a traditional Egyptian coronation ceremony.

In early 331 B.C.E., Alexander left most of his forces behind and set out on a religious journey to the oasis of Siwah (pronounced SEE-wah) to visit a prophet. He arrived at the site of a famous Oracle of Amon (pronounced AH-mun), the Egyptian King of the Gods. Historians believe Alexander was anxious to hear predictions from the oracle of success in future battles. They also believe he wanted to confirm that he was—as his mother had often told him—the true son of Zeus.

Alexander's visit to the oasis excited the Egyptian people. No pharaoh had ever visited the oasis. According to the legend, when Alexander arrived at the temple of the oracle, the oldest of the priests greeted him as Son of Ammon, and King. This greeting confirmed Alexander's belief that he was a true "Son of the King of the Gods." Alexander asked the oracle several questions, the most significant of which was whether he would indeed conquer the whole world. The answer was yes.

Before he left Egypt, Alexander laid the foundation for an important new city. He chose a site northwest of the city of Memphis, and named it after himself: Alexandria. Alexander chose this site because he believed the new city—located on the Egyptian coast—could develop into an

important port and trade center. Alexander helped lay the plans for his new city. He decided where the marketplace and the temples should be located. He also determined which Gods should have their temples in the city's foundation, and even allowed temples to be built honoring Egyptian Gods.

Alexandria later became a magnificent city and a center for learning that would last for hundreds of years. The Alexandria Museum became a center of Greek and Near Eastern culture. Its library—at the time the largest in the world—contained hundreds of thousands of volumes. The library helped to preserve important Greek and Near Eastern cultural achievements. It also served as a study center for some of the greatest Greek minds in literature, philosophy, science, and mathematics. Alexandria flourished in part because of Alexander's great respect for knowledge and various cultural traditions—not only those he brought with him from Greece, but those he found in Egypt as well.

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 establishment of Alexandria, Egypt, from the perspective of the conqueror—show that Alexander played an important role in this event.
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. Describe how you were welcomed by the Egyptians when you first entered their country. Boast about your role in founding the city of Alexandria.

Macedonian general: Introduce yourself to the class as Ptolemy (pronounced TOL-eh-mee), one of Alexander's generals. Explain why Alexander thought he was destined to be the ruler of the whole world. Describe how Alexandria became a magnificent city and center for learning.

Macedonian general: Introduce yourself to the class as Parmenio (pronounced pah-reh-MEN-ee-oh), another of Alexander's generals. Tell the class that prior to Alexander's arrival, the Egyptians had been subjected to 20 years of harsh rule by the Persians. Boast about Alexander's wise decision to found Alexandria on the coast of Egypt.

Egyptian priest: Introduce yourself to the class as Hesire (pronounced heh-SEER), an Egyptian priest. Explain why the Egyptians enthroned Alexander as pharaoh. Describe how Alexander showed great respect for the religious practices of your people.