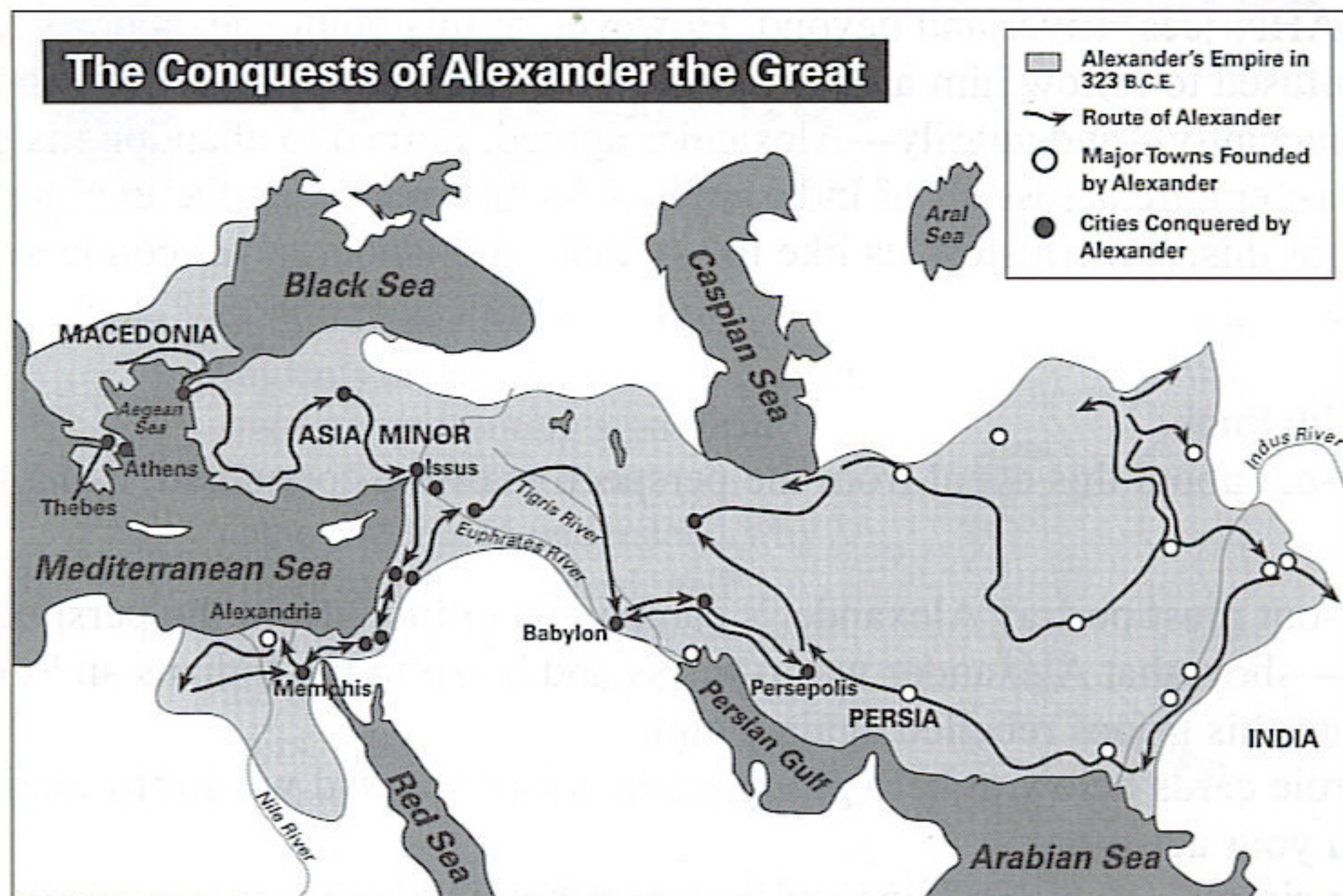


Information About Event D: Alexander in India from the Perspective of Conquered



By the year 327 B.C.E., Alexander the Great had conquered all of Greece, Egypt, and the Persian Empire. Still, he was not satisfied. In that year, Alexander led his troops over the Hindu Kush mountains down into the plain by the Indus River. The Greeks called this region India. (Many of Alexander's campaigns took place within the boundaries of modern-day Pakistan.)

Alexander and his forces spent the next three years in India. They fought many battles, conquered many territories, and suffered heavy losses. Many Indian kings strongly resisted Alexander's attempts to bring India under his empire. They used every means they had—including new elements of warfare such as elephants—to fight the heavily armed Macedonian forces. One brave king named Porus (pronounced POR-uss) nearly led his troops to victory over Alexander, despite being outnumbered and surrounded.

By the fall of 326 B.C.E., Alexander's armies had already fought and defeated many Indian rulers. The forces then began a movement west and south into the Punjab (pronounced POON-jahb) region. They found resistance wherever they went—and met it with total ruthlessness. In town after town, when natives resisted or tried to flee, the Macedonian forces adopted a single tactic: slaughter all males, and enslave all women and children.

In one nine-month period, Alexander's forces traveled down the Indus River—and killed as many as 80,000 people. The Macedonians were especially harsh in dealing with the *Brahmins*, the Indian holy men who often advised and encouraged the Indian kings to resist Alexander. When his forces were able to capture Brahmins, Alexander would often question them closely, trying to learn as much as he could about Hinduism, the Indian religion. However, then Alexander had them executed for encouraging the Indian kings to resist his rule.

By the end of 326 B.C.E., Alexander and his men had been conquering territories and foreign lands for more than eight years. They had journeyed thousands of miles. They often traveled for months in brutal heat across deserts, and in horrible snow and cold over mountains. Now, Alexander was intent on traveling east into the deepest part of India—all the way to the Ganges (pronounced GAHN-jees) River and beyond. However, at this point Alexander's forces turned on him. They refused to follow him any farther, and demanded that the army turn around and head home. Reluctantly—and angrily—Alexander agreed. Forced to abandon his goal of spreading his vast empire across all of India, Alexander bitterly began the long journey toward home. Because of this, some historians like to say that “Alexander never conquered India; it conquered him.”

Act-It-Out Guidelines

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

1. Your act-it-out must portray Alexander's campaigns in India from the perspective of the conquered—show that Alexander was ruthless and harsh to the Indians and that he left India because his troops rebelled against him.
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. Tell the class that you remained unsatisfied, even after conquering Greece, Egypt, and the Persian Empire. Describe how you felt when your soldiers refused to follow you beyond the Ganges River.

Macedonian commander: Tell the class that you are Coenus (pronounced KEE-nuss), one of Alexander's most dependable commanders. Describe the conditions under which Alexander's army was forced to travel and fight. Tell the class that after the campaigns in India, most of Alexander's army had lost faith in his ability to lead.

Indian king: Introduce yourself to the class as Porus, a powerful Indian king. Describe how you bravely used every means of warfare to resist Alexander's forces and nearly led your troops to victory. Tell the class that Alexander never conquered India, it conquered him.

Indian Brahmin: Introduce yourself to the class as Yajna (pronounced YAHJ-nah), an Indian holy man. Describe how Alexander's forces treated Indians living in the Punjab. Tell the class that in one nine-month period, Alexander's forces killed as many as 80,000 people. Explain how Alexander mistreated many of your fellow Brahmins.