

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Alexander the Great

From a young age, Alexander knew he was destined for greatness. Though his father was a Macedonian general, his mother told him that he was the son of a Greek god. His entire life, Alexander believed that he was divine.

As a youth, he studied under Aristotle, one of the best-known and well-respected philosophers of his time. He also studied literature and music, and grew up to be a strong and courageous.

At the age of twelve, Alexander made a bet with his father about a horse that he wanted. He proposed that if he could ride the horse then his father would buy it for him. If he was unable to ride the horse, he would have to pay for it himself. But Alexander was keeping something to himself: he had figured out that the horse was afraid of his own shadow, and it was this fear that was making the horse wild and dangerous; not his true temperament. Before getting on the horse, Alexander turned the horse to face into the sun so that his shadow fell behind him. In this way, Alexander was able to get on the horse and ride him, winning his bet.

His father bought him the horse, whom Alexander named Bucephalus. His father told Alexander that he would have to find a kingdom worthy of him, because Macedon was “too small for him”. Later in his life, Alexander would build a city and name it Bucephala, after his beloved horse.

Alexander grew up to be one of the greatest generals in history. Even in his greatest victories, he honored the soldiers and commanders who had died in battle fighting against him. He did not allow any mistreatment of conquered people. And whenever he won a battle, he absorbed all of the soldiers remaining from the losing side into his own army, thus ever-increasing the size of his army and, thus, his own power.

He also did not think himself so special that he distanced himself from the hardships of war. He endured thirst and hunger right alongside of his men. If his men were walking, he walked. In all that he did he provided an example to his troops.

One famous story is about how Alexander captured a city that was on an island in the Mediterranean Sea. The island was not far from the mainland, so Alexander had an idea to build a bridge out to it. He soldiers used trees, reed and rocks to build a passageway out to the island. The people on the island did everything they

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could to stop Alexander's army, but within seven months they reached the island of Tyre and conquered the city.

Alexander the Great conquered the whole then-known world during his lifetime. He held power over Greece, Persia and Egypt, and build a city in Egypt which he named after himself—Alexandria. In Macedonia he was king; in Egypt he was Pharoah.

Alexander died when he was thirty-three. No one is really sure how. One theory is that he was poisoned. Another is that he died of malaria, which, if is true, would mean that the greatest general of all time was defeated by a mere mosquito.

1. Why did Alexander believe he was divine?

- ☐ a. he was very religious
- ☐ b. his father was a general
- ☐ c. his mother told him his father was a god

2. Under which famous philosopher did Alexander study?

- ☐ a. Plato
- ☐ b. Aristotle
- ☐ c. Socrates

3. What was Alexander's horse afraid of?

- ☐ a. his own shadow
- ☐ b. Alexander's father
- ☐ c. the whip

4. As a general, Alexander did not allow:

- ☐ a. mistreatment of horses
- ☐ b. mistreatment of conquered people
- ☐ c. mistreatment of women

5. Alexander increased the size of his army by:

- ☐ a. conquering people
- ☐ b. recruiting soldiers
- ☐ c. absorbing soldiers from the losing side of each battle

6. Alexander's army captured the city of Tyre by:

- ☐ a. building a bridge to it
- ☐ b. attacking it
- ☐ c. starving it

## **ANSWERS**

1. C
2. B
3. A
4. B
5. C
6. A