**An Idea That Tried to Conquer the World Name:**

**Date: Block:**

**Directions:**

1. **READ the introduction and the story.**
2. **ANNOTATE while you read the introduction AND the story (circle unknown words, underline important phrases, “talk back” by writing your thoughts)**
3. **ANSWER the questions at the end of the reading.**

Talk Back Below!

In the fourth century B.C.E., military power in the lands around the Aegean Sea shifted to the kingdom of Macedonia, to the north of Greece. When Philip II became its king in 359 B.C.E., he knew that the Greek city-states were still divided due to the Peloponnesian War between Sparta and Athens, and their continued fighting among themselves had made them weak. Philip’s armies easily defeated Athens and Thebes in 338 B.C.E. All of the Greek states except Sparta were finally united, but under the control of Macedonia.

Philip was an excellent organizer and politician. By the time of his death in 336 B.C.E., he had made Macedonia into a world power. Philip created the military power and battle tactics with which his son Alexander would conquer much of the known world.

Alexander was born in 356 B.C.E. From an early age, he aspired to become a great military leader. His goal was to surpass his father’s victories – and he succeeded. Alexander had another great teacher – the Greek philosopher Aristotle, who taught him Greek history, literature, and philosophy.

During his years in power, Alexander (who was called “the Great”) spent most of his time on the battlefield in preparation for battle. His armies conquered lands as far east as the Indus River, including the Persian Empire that had threatened the Greeks in the fifth century. Alexander built some 20 cities, all of which he named Alexandria, in the lands he conquered. Each city was a center of Greek culture. Perhaps the most famous Alexandria was in Egypt. This city became a great center of trade and learning.

Alexander’s victories opened the door for the spread of Hellenic (Greek) culture and learning throughout the known world. (The Greeks called themselves Hellenes, and their land Hellas). The laws, calendar, and money of the Greeks were introduced wherever they went. Greek became the international language throughout the world. Gradually, after his death, a vital new (Hellenistic) culture emerged that blended Greek, Persian, Egyptian, and Indian cultures. This Hellenistic culture would flourish and thrive for several centuries.

**Your name was Alexander, and you wanted to be remembered as the person who conquered and united the entire world as one great civilization.**

**As a boy, you tamed a wild horse that no one else could manage. You were able to do this because you were observant and smarter than the others. You realized the horse was afraid of its own shadow. So you made sure that when you trained it, the horse faced the sun and could not see its shadow. This experience helped to convince you that if you were smarter than your enemies, you would emerge victorious whenever you went to war. You were determined never to be defeated on the field of battle.**

**You were only 20 years old when you became king of Macedonia. True to your dream, you united the Greek cities and then went on to smashing victories against the Persians. Even in victory you were clever. You married a Persian princess and ordered your soldiers to marry Persian women. This made it easier for you to convince the Persian people to accept your rule.**

**At the same time, you helped to introduce Greek learning and culture to the Persian people. They learned the Greek language. Greek literature, art, culture, laws, and customs were introduced. This was only the beginning. It was your plan to spread the teachings of the Greek people all over the world.**

**Next, you marched into Egypt, conquered it, and introduced Greek ideas to the Egyptians. But even though you continued to fight and spread Greek culture, the people in the conquered lands kept their own culture as well. In fact, the conquering Greeks were soon influenced by the cultures of the east. Some Greeks were attracted to eastern religions. Others learned new methods of business and trade from the eastern merchants. Greek scientists were inspired to use their knowledge to help solve practical problems. And Greek philosophers began to teach that people should no longer regard only their fellow citizens as their equals. People should, instead, regard men and women all over the world as their fellow citizens.**

**And even while Greek and eastern ideas were fusing and changing, you continued to conquer. Soon you were leading your troops into India, where you faced an army backed by hundreds of elephants. You won that great battle and urged your army onward to conquer new lands. But your troops had other ideas. They had been away from home for six years, and they were tired and homesick. They begged you to allow them to return home. Reluctantly, you gave your consent.**

**Your plan was to rest your troops and then gather them together for the final campaign to conquer the rest of the world. But in the Babylonian city of Susa you became ill with fever, and your condition quickly became hopeless. You were 33 years old when you died, and your dream of conquering the entire world died with you.**

**Your name was Alexander, and you wanted to be remembered as the person who conquered the entire world. You never did conquer the entire world, but 2,300 years after your death you are still remembered.**

**Understanding the Story: Write T for each statement that is true, F for each statement that is false, and O for each statement that is an OPINION.**

1. \_\_\_\_ Alexander was the greatest general the world has ever seen.
2. \_\_\_\_ Alexander refused to permit his soldiers to marry women in the lands he conquered.
3. \_\_\_\_ Alexander built many cities that he named Alexandria.
4. \_\_\_\_ During his years in power, Alexander spent most of his time on the battlefield.
5. \_\_\_\_ If Alexander had lived longer, he would have conquered the entire world.
6. \_\_\_\_ The Greeks were superior to all people at the time.

**Questions for Review: Answer the following on a separate sheet of paper**

1. Why was King Philip of Macedonia so successful?
2. How did Alexander encourage the spread of Greek, or Hellenic, culture?
3. How were the Greeks influenced by the cultures of the east?
4. What is the difference between Hellenic and Hellenistic cultures?
5. What achievement do you think was Alexander’s greatest? Why?
6. Would the Greeks have made such an impact on the world without Alexander? Why or why not?
7. Do you think Alexander treated conquered people fairly? Why or why not?

**Activities: Choose TWO of the following to answer**

1. Imagine that you interview Alexander for your school newspaper. Ask him why he feels that he must conquer the world. Then let him explain how he is able to rule his empire when he spends so much time on the battlefield.
2. Prepare a report card for Alexander the Great. Grade him in the following ways and give reasons for each grade: (a) leadership (b) training (c) military ability and battle tactics (d) role in spreading Hellenism
3. Imagine that you are an Egyptian general. You have been told that you will soon be defending your country against Alexander’s army. What is your plan for fighting a winning battle against your enemy? What are your thoughts after the battle?