Text 1: The New Era of Alexander the Great

Topic 5: Ancient Greece
Lesson 4: Alexander the Great and the Legacy of Greece
The New Era of Alexander the Great

In 338 B.C.E., Athens fell to the Macedonian army

Athens and the other Greek city-states lost their independence

Yet the disaster ushered in a new age in which Greek culture spread from the Mediterranean to the borders of India
The New Era of Alexander the Great

The architect of this new era was the man who would eventually become known to history as Alexander the Great.
The New Era of Alexander the Great

To the Greeks, the rugged, mountainous kingdom of Macedonia was a backward, half-civilized land.

The rulers of this frontier land, in fact, were of Greek origin and kept ties to their Greek neighbors.

As a youth, Philip II had lived in Thebes and had come to admire Greek culture.
Later, he hired Aristotle as a tutor to his young son Alexander.
Philip II Takes Control of Greece

When Philip II gained the throne in 359 B.C.E. he dreamed of conquering the prosperous city-states to the south.

He built a superb and powerful army.

Through threats, bribery, and diplomacy, he formed alliances with many Greek city-states.

Others he conquered.
In 338 B.C.E., when Athens and Thebes joined forces against him, Philip II defeated them at the Battle of Chaeronea. He then brought all of Greece under his control.
Philip II Takes Control of Greece

Philip had a still grander dream—to conquer the Persian empire.

Before he could achieve that plan, though, he was assassinated at his daughter’s wedding.

Philip’s queen, Olympias, then outmaneuvered his other wives and children to put her own son, Alexander, on the throne.
Alexander Conquers Persia

Alexander was only 20 years old
Yet he was already an experienced soldier who shared his father’s ambitions
With Greece subdued, he began organizing the forces needed to conquer Persia
By 334 B.C.E. he had enough ships to cross the Dardanelles, the strait separating Europe from Asia Minor
Persia was no longer the great power it had once been
The emperor Darius III was weak, and the provinces were often in rebellion against him
Still, the Persian empire stretched more than 2,000 miles from Egypt to India
Alexander Conquers Persia

Alexander won his first victory against the Persians at the Granicus River.

He then moved from victory to victory, marching through Asia Minor into Palestine and south to Egypt before turning east again to take Babylon in 331 B.C.E., and other cities followed.

But before Alexander could capture Darius, the Persian emperor was murdered.
The March into India

With much of the Persian empire under his control, the restless Alexander headed farther east. He crossed the Hindu Kush into northern India. There, in 326 B.C.E., his troops for the first time faced soldiers mounted on war elephants.
The March into India

Although Alexander never lost a battle, his soldiers were tired of the long campaign and refused to go farther east.

Reluctantly, Alexander agreed to turn back.

After a long and difficult march, they reached Babylon, where Alexander began planning a new campaign.
The Death of Alexander

Before he could set out again, the thirty-two-year-old fell victim to a sudden fever.

As Alexander lay dying, his commanders asked to whom he left his immense empire.

“To the strongest,” he is said to have whispered.
The Death of Alexander

No one leader proved strong enough to succeed Alexander. Instead, after years of disorder, three generals divided up the empire. Macedonia and Greece went to one general, Egypt to another, and most of Persia to a third. For 300 years, their descendants competed for power over the lands Alexander had conquered.