Text 2: Alexander’s Legacy

Topic 5: Ancient Greece
Lesson 4: Alexander the Great and the Legacy of Greece
OBJECTIVES

Identify the important ideas Alexander promoted for the world he created through his empire

Determine how Alexandria became a cultural hub for the entire Hellenistic world

Analyze how the role of women changed in this part of the world
Alexander’s Legacy

Alexander’s empire soon crumbled following his premature death.

He had unleashed changes that would ripple across the Mediterranean world and the Middle East for centuries.

His most lasting achievement was the spread of Greek culture.
Cultures Blend

Across his empire, Alexander founded many new cities, most of them named after him.

The generals who succeeded him founded still more.

Greek soldiers, traders, and artisans settled these new cities.
From Egypt to the borders of India, they built Greek temples, filled them with Greek statues, and held athletic contests as they had in Greece.

Local people assimilated, or absorbed, Greek ideas.

Greek settlers adopted local customs.
Alexander had encouraged a blending of eastern and western cultures.

Married a Persian woman and urged his soldiers to follow his example.

 Adopted many Persian customs, including Persian dress.
Gradually, after his death, a vital new culture emerged that blended Greek, Persian, Egyptian, and Indian influences.

This Hellenistic civilization would flourish for several centuries.
Alexandria: The Cultural Capital

At the very heart of the Hellenistic world stood the city of Alexandria, Egypt.

Located on the sea lanes between Europe and Asia, its markets boasted a wide range of goods, from Greek marble to Arabian spices to East African ivory.
A Greek architect had drawn up plans for the city, which would become home to almost a million people.

Among the city’s marvelous sights was the Pharos, an enormous lighthouse that soared 440 feet into the air.
Alexander and his successors encouraged the work of scholars.

The rulers of Alexandria built the great Museum as a center of learning.

The Museum boasted laboratories, lecture halls, and a zoo.

Its library had thousands of scrolls representing the accumulated knowledge of the ancient world.
Women Take New Roles

Paintings, statues, and legal codes show that women were no longer restricted to their homes during the Hellenistic period.

More women learned to read and write.

Some became philosophers or poets.
Royal women held considerable power, working alongside husbands and sons who were the actual rulers.

In Egypt, the able and clever queen Cleopatra VII came to rule in her own right.