

What makes a great leader? Throughout history, leaders around the world have been given the title of “great.” Alexander III of Macedonia was one such ruler. He lived from 356-323 BCE and ruled from the age of twenty until his death at the age of thirty-three.

As a child, Alexander’s father King Philip hired tutors to teach his son. Among these teachers was the Greek philosopher Aristotle who taught Alexander much about Greek literature, philosophy and science. His favorite Greek hero was Achilles, the warrior hero in the Iliad. Alexander vowed that one day he would visit the site of Troy, in Asia Minor, and lay a wreath on the tomb of his hero.

During his rule as King of Macedonia, Alexander conquered much of what was then the civilized world. He desired to create a world monarchy. First defeating the rebellious Greek city-states, Alexander then went on to invade the Persian Empire in Asia Minor and Egypt. His desire was to have the local culture in the regions he conquered co-exist with the Greek ideas and culture that he brought with him. In 323 BCE, while in Babylon, Alexander died of a fever. With his death came the collapse of his empire. It was divided into three kingdoms ruled by descendants of his commanders.

Based on his actions and his character, does Alexander III of Macedonia deserve the title of “the Great?” In this activity, you are going to read primary and secondary source documents to gather evidence that will help you answer this focus question. You will have a chance to work in a group to discuss your ideas. Then you will use your prior knowledge and details from the primary and secondary sources to summarize what you have learned from this historical investigation.