

# *Alexander the Great: Hero or Villain?*

## Background Notes

- Born 356 BCE to Philip of Macedon and Olympias
- Parents were married unhappily for 20 years
- Philip assassinated in 336 BCE
- Ruled for 13 years
- Died (age 32) in Babylon on the return trip in which he fell ill

| Hero   | Villain  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many historians consider him the greatest military leader of all time</li> <li>• Military genius and bravery drove him to conquer many lands</li> <li>• Philosophy: not to plunder the lands he conquered and allowed subjects to continue their own customs and beliefs</li> <li>• Frequently learned the about the cultures he conquered</li> <li>• Spread Greek culture and ideas</li> <li>• Founded more than 20 cities (many named Alexandria)</li> <li>• Helped to preserve Greek culture posthumously with the spread of the culture to these areas—they rose in wealth</li> <li>• Clever and precocious—tamed a wild stallion at age 9</li> <li>• Educated by Aristotle—political philosophy, literature, natural history and medicine</li> <li>• Age 16 first battlefield command</li> <li>• Age 18 first major victory against Theban troops = victory for Philip and claims all of Greece</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Army that he had was good only b/c of Philip of Macedon's reorganization, reformed and strengthened army</li> <li>• With force, Alex was able to spread Macedonian rule across Egypt, Persian and India over 13 years</li> <li>• Neglected his own kingdom</li> <li>• Left 2 years after taking over to conquer lands and never returned home again</li> <li>• Local leaders in his place abuse power and ignored peoples' needs</li> <li>• Extreme emotional temperament b/c of unsteady childhood</li> <li>• Believed he could accomplish great things and an empire beyond what his father created</li> <li>• Demanded and received the utmost allegiance and obedience from his advisors, but often brutal towards them</li> <li>• Heavy consumption of alcohol caused him to make poor decisions = lots of casualties</li> <li>• He neglected to designate a legitimate heir = empire crumbles after his death</li> <li>• Relatives, generals, etc. fought for control over the vast empire</li> </ul> |