Classical Greece – Alexander and the Hellenistic Empire

Alexander’s Childhood and Rise to Power
Phillip II
- Alexander’s Father
- King of Macedonia
  o Loved everything about Greece
- Phillip Conquers Greece (338 B.C.E.)
  o Through Alliances, Bribes, and War
  o Leaves Sparta alone

Alexander’s Education
- Grew up learning Greek Culture
  o Educated by Aristotle
- Proved early on to be good Military Commander
  o Won his first war at age of 16

Alexander’s Rise to Power
- Phillip married Macedonian woman and had a son
- Phillip Assassinated in 336 B.C.E.
- Olympia (Alexander’s mother) able to outmaneuver others and Alexander is placed on throne
- First act of power was to consolidate power at home, Greece, and in the Balkans

Building the Hellenistic Empire
Empire Building: Asia Minor
- In 334 B.C.E. Alexander crosses the Hellespont into Asia Minor
  • Only took about 35,000 Greek Soldiers with him
- Fought local Persian Army (And Greeks)
- Attacked coastal cities to make it hard for Darius III’s Navy
- Undid Gordian Knot

Empire Building: Syria
- Alexander continues strategy of trying to destroy ports
- Finally meets Darius III’s army at Battle of Issus
  o Alexander Tricks Darius
  o Main body of army holds Darius’ Army
  o Alexander’s cavalry comes around on the left in direct attack on Darius
  o Darius runs leaving wife, children, and treasure behind
- Siege of Tyre
  o Suppose to be impossible to take over
  o Alexander Tried and Failed, then tried again and won
  o Punished population for not surrendering
  o 2000 Crucified
  o All males of military age killed
  o Everyone else sold into slavery
- **Attack on Hebrew People**
  - Most cities open gates (including Jerusalem)
  - Gaza does not
    - Again Alexander makes an example and slaughters everyone

**Empire Building: Egypt**
- Alexander walks into Egypt and is hailed as a liberator
- Founds city of Alexandria
  - Hellenistic Cultural center in Egypt
    - Great Library – Center of Scholarship
    - Great Lighthouse – Architectural Wonder
- Upon death of Alexander Egypt falls under control of Ptolemy
  - Dynasty rules under 30 B.C.E.
    - Cleopatra last of Dynasty

**Empire Building: Persia**
- Alexander heads into Persia and meets Darius at Gaugamela
  - Alexander again tricks Darius
    - This time attacks Darius’ left
    - Alexander makes direct attack on Darius and again makes him run away
  - Darius again runs away
  - This time leaving behind an Empire
- Captures Persian Capital of Persepolis
  - Him and Army stay for 5 months
- Still needed to make himself legitimate king
  - Meant killing Darius
    - Darius is killed by bodyguard 330 B.C.E.
    - Alexander now considered true king of Persia

**Empire Building: India**
- Army reaches Hyphasis River and mutinies
  - Too long since they were home
  - Too far away from home
  - Don’t want to face anymore Indian Armies
- Alexander tries to convince army to go further but they don’t want to
  - Forced to head home
    - Alexander heads back to Persia to plan new attacks into Arabia and India 324 B.C.E.
    - June 10th or 11th, 323 B.C.E. Alexander dies in Babylon
    - Poison or Disease
    - Body placed in Alexandria and becomes sacred site for Greeks and Romans
Alexander’s Legacy

- At height of power Alexander’s Empire was the known world
  - Egypt, Greece, Persia
- Alexander Left no true Heir to the throne
- Empire is split up between Alexander’s Generals
  - Empire fought over by descendants for next 300 years
- Spread of Greek Culture
  - Everywhere Armies went they took culture with them