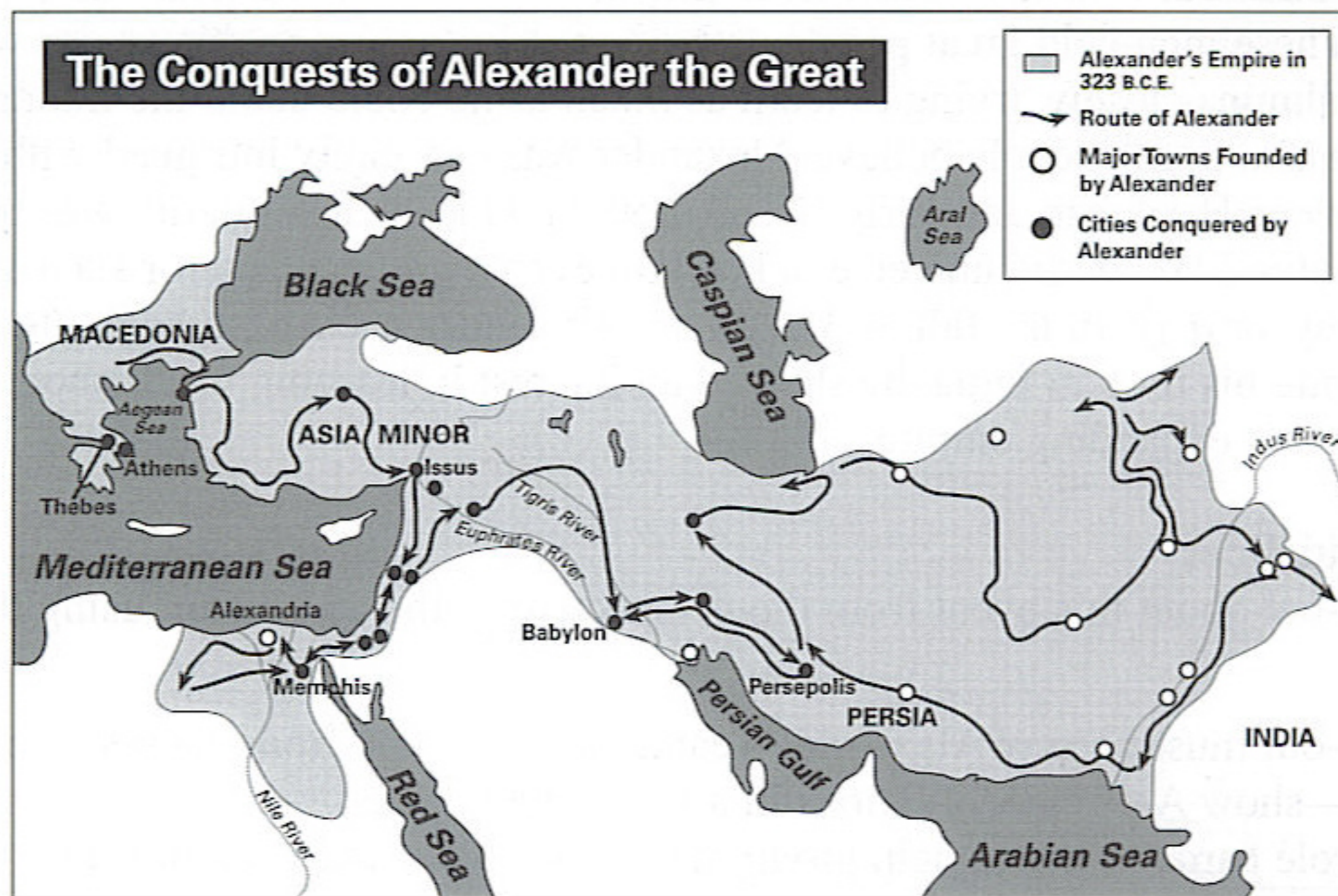


Information About Event D: Alexander in India from the Perspective of Conqueror



For years Alexander had heard fantastic stories about the lands east of Persia. Intrigued by these tales, in 327 B.C.E., he led his troops over the Hindu Kush mountains into the plains by the Indus River. The Greeks called this region India. (Many of Alexander's campaigns took place within the boundaries of modern-day Pakistan.) As Alexander made his way farther east, some local rulers willingly submitted to him and paid him tribute. Then, in the summer of 326 B.C.E., Alexander faced a shrewd and brilliant Indian king named Porus (pronounced POR-uss). This leader came armed with a large military force and a fearsome new war "machine"—elephants.

The two forces met at the River Hydaspes (pronounced hy-DASS-pehz). Alexander's troops had never battled an army with elephants. At first the troops could not even cross the river. Porus stationed his elephants all across the river's eastern bank, and the beasts frightened the Macedonians' horses. Porus also believed that Alexander could not cross because the battle took place during the *monsoon* season, when heavy rainfall was expected every day.

The major battle that followed proved to be Alexander's military masterpiece. Alexander divided his forces into three groups. He took one group far upstream, using the heavy rains to conceal his movements. He quickly crossed the river, and surprised the enemy with a full-scale attack. With his cavalry force, he attacked from two directions along Porus's line of foot soldiers, cavalry, and elephants. Then Alexander sent another group of cavalry to attack the Indian forces from the rear. As the cavalry attacked, they killed many of the elephants' riders and drove the animals back into the Indian forces. The riderless elephants panicked. They began to cause more destruction to Porus's forces than to Alexander's. Finally, Alexander sent in his infantry to finish the job. The Indian troops were surrounded and could not fight back

effectively. Porus gave himself up personally to Alexander. Alexander rewarded his bravery by granting Porus's wish to rule Indian territory—in Alexander's name.

After the Battle of the River Hydaspes, Alexander continued to move farther east. During the conquests that followed, he often came across Indian holy men, called *Brahmins* (pronounced BRAH-minz). These men held great power with various Indian kings. Alexander would question the Brahmins closely, trying to learn as much as he could about the Indian religion known as *Hinduism*. Some people believe Alexander was especially intrigued with the similarities between Hinduism and early Greek thought. One such similarity was belief in the existence of a natural law in the universe, a law that even a great conqueror such as Alexander could not disobey, or *defy*. In the fall of 326 B.C.E., Alexander decided to begin the journey home. Still, during his time in India, he showed an interest in learning much about the land he wished to add to his expanding empire.

Act-It-Out Guidelines

Create an act-it-out about this event from the perspective of the conqueror, using these guidelines:

1. Your act-it-out must portray Alexander's campaigns in India from the perspective of the conqueror—show Alexander's actions in a favorable manner.
2. Study the role cards below to help group members understand what information should be included in your act-it-out.
3. Brainstorm simple actions and lines of dialogue that will help you dramatically convey the information on the role cards.
4. Practice performing your act-it-out so that it incorporates all group members and can be presented in less than 2 minutes.

Role Cards

Alexander: Explain who you are. Explain why you were anxious to lead your forces into India. Boast about how you defeated King Porus's forces at the River Hydaspes.

Macedonian soldier: Introduce yourself to the class as Nearchus (pronounced nee-AR-kuss), one of Alexander's soldiers. Explain how Alexander displayed great courage in leading the Macedonian army over the Hindu Kush mountains. Tell the class that when Alexander reached India, he had traveled over 2,000 miles from his home in Macedonia.

Indian king: Introduce yourself to the class as Porus, an Indian king. Tell the class that Alexander was the first military leader to defeat your army of elephants. Explain how Alexander rewarded your bravery by allowing you to continue ruling Indian territory.

Indian Brahmin: Introduce yourself to the class as Garji (pronounced GAR-jee), an Indian holy man. Describe how Alexander questioned you to learn more about Hinduism. Explain how Alexander was intrigued by the similarities between Hinduism and early Greek thought.