

Teacher's Guide Version

Apprentice Level (Grade 6) Book 3 Lesson 9: Alexander the Great

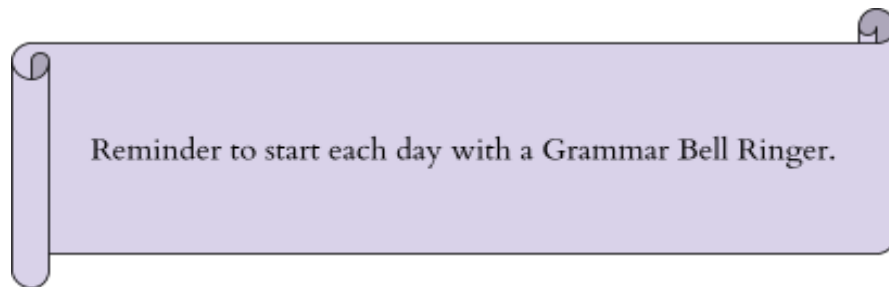
Lesson Length: 2 to 3 periods, 50 minutes each

Lexile Level: 910-1190

Supplementary Required Readings:

- **Kingfisher: Review of Alexander the Great 336-323 BC** (Review this reading *after* the lesson. Students should have already read this page before, in book 2 lesson 10.)
- The class novel, *Bronze Bow* ch. 19-20

Teacher note: The second day of this lesson includes a long but easy reading, which could be assigned as homework at the end of Day 2. Before teaching Day 2, we strongly encourage you to read the Rhetorical response #1 for Day 2, and complete your own imitative writing to share with the students when they reach that point.



Day 1

You will teach this lesson over two days, possibly three. Here is day 1.

Part I – Invoking Curiosity and Wonder

Invite your students to observe this painting closely for a few moments.

After students have examined the painting, have them close their books. Ask for one student to narrate the painting, describing what it depicts in as much detail as possible. Ask other students, “What details can you add to that narration?” after the first student has told as much as he or she can about the painting.

Say: The painting you just observed is titled *Olympias Presenting the Young Alexander the Great to Aristotle* by Gerard Hoet, painted before 1733. Write this title beneath the artwork in your books. (Pause to allow students to write)

Part II - Gathering Knowledge

The Alexander we are discussing in this lesson is usually called Alexander the Great. Do you already know anything about him?

Pause and wait for contributions. Allow several students to share. Then say: Take a few notes using the lines in your book, as we discuss who Alexander the Great was.

Note that students do not have this information in their books.

Alexander was the son of a king, King Phillip II of Macedonia, and was tutored in his youth by Aristotle, who was himself the student of Plato. The painting we just observed is an artist's depiction of the two meeting for the first time, introduced by Alexander's mother, Olympia. Like most noble Macedonian youths, he learned philosophy, politics, and rhetoric, and was taught to read, to play music, to ride and hunt, and to fight. Aristotle taught him to communicate well and to manage people effectively. Alexander also learned moral values and the daily routines of self discipline from the great teacher.

His father, King Phillip II, conquered and unified most of the city-states of Greece between 359 and 336 BC. Alexander and his father did not always get along very well. Alexander went on to conquer a great deal more. Alexander is widely considered one of the greatest military minds of all of history, hence the moniker, "the Great."

Today we will be reading a story from his youth: the story of how Alexander meets his famous horse, Bucephalus.

Let's quickly go over how to pronounce some of the names in this story.

Bucephalus: (byoo-SEFF-a-luss)

Philonicus: (fih-LON- ih-kuss)

Macedon (MASS- ih- don)

Macedonia (Mass- ih -DOH- nee- uh)

Part III- Reading & Narrating

Ask students to take turns reading aloud the story of Bucephalus, stopping to narrate where indicated.

Part IV - Reflective Responses

After reading and narrating the text, discuss its significance with students. Use **any or all** of the following questions to guide your discussion. Reflective responses are basically Socratic dialogue questions and should not require any writing.

1. **What words or phrases would you use to describe King Phillip?**
2. **What words or phrases would you use to describe Alexander the Great?**
3. **What virtues did Alexander display? Give evidence from the story to support your answers.**
4. **Do you think this story is true, or made up? Why?**
5. **What else do you wonder about regarding this story?**

Suggested Answers

The following answers are suggestions only. Each question could have multiple answers.

Tip: Only ask a question about which you have your own thoughts and response. If you don't understand the question, then they will not either! If the student gives an answer that does not seem to address the story, or seems blatantly incorrect, ask them more questions (for example: "**What do you mean? What more can you tell us? Why do you say that?**") Never simply tell a student that their answer is incorrect and then move on; that student is unlikely to participate again.

Suggested Answers

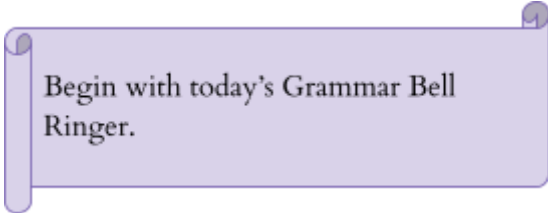
1. *Answers will vary. Phillip was a bit stern and distant, and he and Alexander were never very close. But in this story we see him rightfully angry, and then VERY concerned for the safety of his son.*

2. *Answers will vary. Some answers might include brave, confident or even over-confident, a bit saucy, foolish, reckless, and wise, all at the same time. Ask students WHY they would assign any given answer to Alexander (Find evidence from the text.)*
3. *Bravery, some kindness (to the horse), loyalty, and wisdom.*
4. *Allow several students to answer. It is believed to be basically true, because Alexander had a personal historian who wrote down a great deal about his life during the time he was still living. The notes are considered firsthand or primary source documents. These notes were used by a famous historian and writer named Plutarch, who lived in the first century after Christ's birth. We will read more from him later in this lesson. Bucephalus is considered by historians to be the most famous horse in all of history, and he appears in many works of art. That said, some parts of the story have almost certainly been altered over the years of retellings. In addition, no doubt the personal historian was motivated to tell stories that put his boss, Alexander, in a good light.*
Note: *This can lead into another brief discussion about how we know about history, and how important it is for historians to write things down as accurately as humanly possible.*
5. *Answers will vary, allow several to share.*

Note: Tomorrow's story is longer and may take two days to do if you read it aloud in class. Alternatively, you can assign it for reading homework tonight, as it is a fairly simple reading, and then simply have students narrate at the start of the next class. Or you might also choose to assign it as silent reading in class tomorrow, and then do narrations. Your choice.

Day 2

This continues the previous day's lesson.



Begin with today's Grammar Bell Ringer.

Part I– Reading & Narrating

If students have not read the story as homework, they may either read the following story silently in class, or read it aloud in turns. If they did read it at home last night, have them narrate it well, before beginning the discussion and the writing exercises.

Tip: The story today is longer and may take two days to finish in class, hence the option for having them read silently or at home the night before. This story is “The Conqueror” adapted from *The Children’s Plutarch: Tales of the Greeks* by F. K. Gould.

Say either: Today we will take turns reading aloud this story

or

Today we will be narrating the story you read last night.

Note that this story is a translation of Plutarch’s work. Who can tell me who Plutarch was? (*Plutarch was mentioned yesterday in the class discussion about whether or not the story was true. He lived in the first century AD, and he was a writer and historian of many great men, including Alexander the Great.*)

Ask students to highlight or mark any words that they are not familiar with. Then you can either address these as a class, or have students look up a few for homework and come prepared to share with the class tomorrow. A few vocabulary words in the text have been footnoted already.

Part II - Reflective Responses

Reminder: Check for any words that students marked which they were not familiar with, and go over their annotations briefly, before beginning the responses.

After reading and briefly narrating the text, discuss its significance with students.

Today’s questions are all required. Take your time with them and allow plenty of discussion.

It’s acceptable for this to take more than a day. This is an oral, not a written exercise.

Tip: If a student gives an answer that does not seem to address the story, or seems blatantly

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incorrect, ask more questions (for example: “*What do you mean? What more can you tell us? Why do you say that?*”)

1. Earlier we discussed Alexander’s virtues: does today’s text give any evidence that he also had some vices?
2. What was Alexander’s effect on the world in his 33 years of life? Compare these accomplishments to those of Christ, who also lived 33 years.
3. How does Alexander the Great compare to Ozymandias?
4. Look at the map in your books. What do you notice? (recommend you also project this modern map of the area for them to compare it to: [middle east ref04.jpg \(1120×1322\) \(utexas.edu\)](#) and/or compare it to this physical map of the area: [File:Colorful shaded map of Middle East.jpg - Wikimedia Commons](#))

Suggested Answers

The following answers are suggestions only. Each question could have multiple answers.

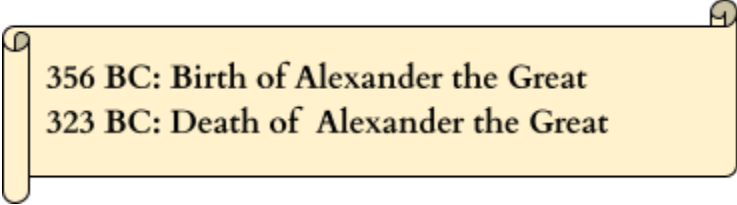
1. *The text said that he did become “puffed with pride” and more vain as he got older, both vices. Sometimes he did not show mercy to his captives. It also says he “could not conquer himself,” so that is the vice of having no self-control. He was known to drink a lot of alcohol. He also ignored his physician’s advice and drank a lot of wine while sick, which may have helped to kill him sooner.*
2. *If students struggle to answer, direct them to re-read the last paragraph of the text. He spread Greek culture across the known world, and established many cities. By the time he was 30, Alexander had conquered so much land that he created one of the largest empires in the ancient world. He was also undefeated in battle; a military genius, his campaign strategies are still taught in military academies across the globe. He is widely considered one of the most influential persons in history. Compare this to Christ: answers will vary again. His accomplishments were not worldly but did change the world dramatically.*
3. *Both were men in the ancient world who conquered large swaths of territory. But Ozymandias’ legacy and influence died out, whereas Alexander the Great is still remembered and even studied. Why is that?
(Partly because a historian bothered to write things down regarding Alexander, and partly because in addition to just conquering, Alexander spread learning and culture to new*

lands.)

In the movie *The Emperor's Club*, the teacher has a plaque hanging on the back wall of the classroom which reads: "I am Shutruk Nahunte, King of Anshand and Sussa, Sovereign of the land of Elam. I destroyed Sippar, took the stele of Niran-Sin, and brought it back to Elam, where I erected it as an offering to my god." Shutruk Nahunte - 1158 B.C. It's a quote from a virtually unknown but actual king, who speaks of his list of conquests, but whom no one has ever really heard of, and who is not studied in 99% of all history classes, because he created no known benefits for the peoples he ruled. The teacher states that this king is unknown in history, **because "great ambition and conquest without contribution is without significance."** This concept can be a significant conversation in your classroom, perhaps even a Socratic Seminar on leadership. Reference also the Roman Catholic Catechism, in particular sections 2234-2240 which covers the duties of governments and of citizens.

4. The map shows the extent of his conquests. Students will hopefully note that his empire stretched from Greece (left side of the map) to the west and south into Africa, and then across the middle east (Persia at that time) and eastward into the lower half of Asia into India. When comparing maps, students may notice many things, such as landforms which might have presented obstacles to Alexander's army, or the fact that he conquered from India to Egypt, including most of the modern Middle East. To reinforce this lesson, you could have students draw the extent of his conquests with their fingers on a globe or classroom map as well.

Say to the students, **Before we continue, take out your Book of Centuries and add the following events and persons:**



356 BC: Birth of Alexander the Great
323 BC: Death of Alexander the Great

Part III – Rhetorical Responses

All students **must** do the first activity, mimetic or imitative writing. They should then do at least one in addition. These can occasionally be taken home as homework or used for a grade in class.

1. **REQUIRED Mimetic (imitative) writing.** This is a fun exercise!! Students should read the excerpt (taken directly from Plutarch’s original work—with minor edits to remove references to drinking.) Then attempt to imitate the writing as precisely as they can in style and structure, but write about their own life and habits, or those of someone close to them. Try to use the same sentence lengths and complexities, etc.

***Tip: Mimetic writing can be quite fun for students.** There are examples here for you to use and share with the students. It is highly recommended that you actually do this exercise ahead of time and then share your example with the class. Space for this is provided just below. Your imitation of the original will inspire them to create their own imitation of the original. Humor and creativity are encouraged.*

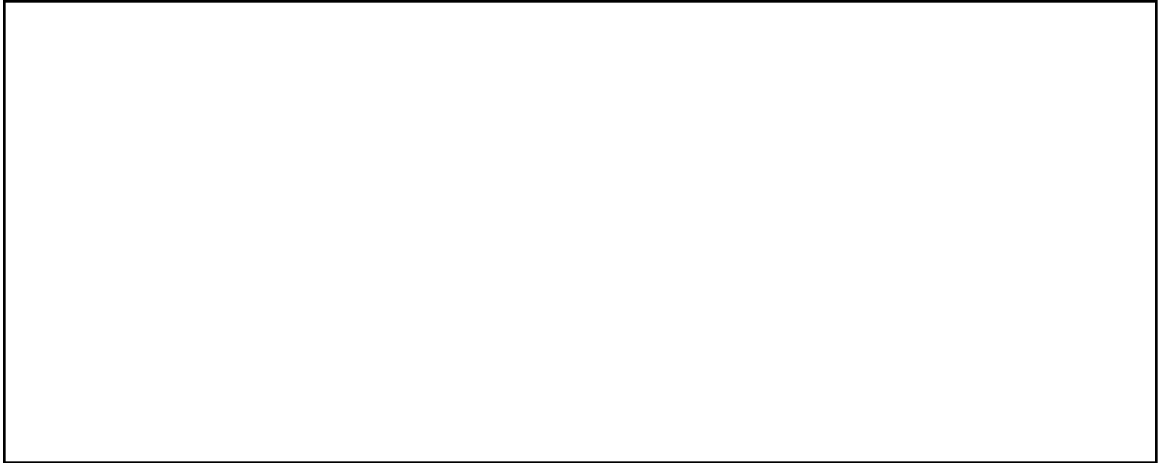
Examples for Students (not in student books)

Please teach these examples so they have a model from which to follow for this exercise. Direct students to the original sentences that are in their student books.

Original Sentence from Story: “*And although in other ways he was of all princes most agreeable in his intercourse, and endowed with every grace, at this time his boastfulness would make him unpleasant and very like a common soldier.*”

Imitation (Mimetic) Sentence A: You (the teacher) make one up and use it as another example to share with them. Perhaps choose a pet, a famous person, etc.

Use the following space to write your imitation to share with your class or do one together as a whole class and write it on the white board.



Imitation (Mimetic) Sentence B: *“And although in other ways she was of all students the most diligent in her studies, and blessed with every insight, at this time her natural laziness would make her sullen and very like a dunce.”*

Imitation (Mimetic) Sentence C: *“And although in other ways he was of all toddlers the most adorable in his appearance, and endowed with tight black curls and an impish grin, on those mornings his sleepiness would make him cranky and frazzled, very like a harried fishmonger.”*

Another Example (not in student books)

Direct students to the original sentence that is in their student books.

Original Sentence from Story: *“In his times of leisure after rising and sacrificing to the gods, he immediately took breakfast sitting; then, he would spend the day in hunting, or administering justice, or arranging his military affairs, or reading.”*

Mimetic Sentence: (about a toddler sibling) *“In her times of leisure after rising and sacrificing a banana and some cereal to the kitchen floor, she immediately took over the household; then, never sitting down once, she would spend the day in chanting nonsense, or racing about, or throwing massive tantrums, or crying.”*

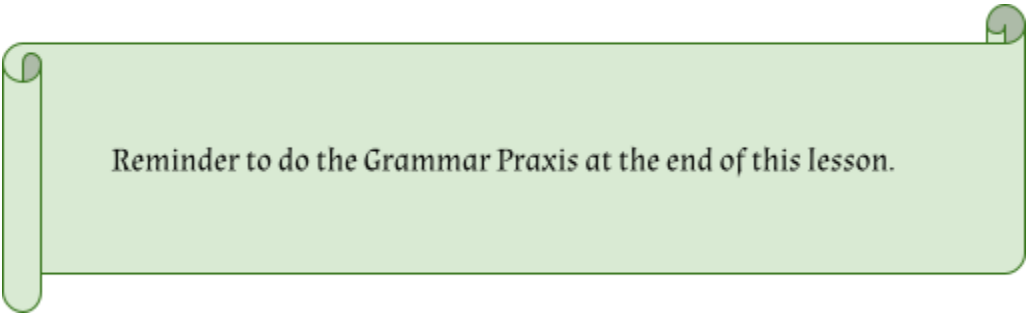
Tip: This simple exercise in mimetic writing can be most enjoyable and should be practiced as often as possible when time allows. We have seen students write about Santa Claus, the local firemen, themselves, their parents, their best friends, and even

comic book heroes in this exercise. One student wrote about Covid. It can be delightful to read these aloud to one another: students begin to compete to be the most clever. Take some time with this exercise. Enjoy it! Let the students share if they want to.

2. Students may then choose one of the following options to also complete. (These are also in their student books). Alternatively, you may assign specific activities to students, singly or in groups.

Tip: You may use this as a quiz grade. If you do, it is recommended that you create a simple rubric for each activity so that they know what is expected of them and what you are looking for in order to grade their activity.

- A. Instruct students to create their own beautiful full color hand drawn map of Alexander the Great's empire. Creating hand-drawn maps is a classical skill! Have them mark his journeys.
- B. Students should imagine what might have happened if Alexander had lived to be 60. Write an alternative ending to his story.
- C. Reflect upon the following questions, and then write a response: How did Alexander change in the course of the story? What lessons did he learn? What about him was heroic or admirable?
- D. Write about your favorite scene from the story as if it were a short story for younger children.



Reminder to do the Grammar Praxis at the end of this lesson.

Part IV – Extensions (Optional)

Teacher Reminder: Please read.

The curriculum offers ample opportunities to practice research skills. Your students DO NOT have to do them all. In addition, it is important to note the vast difference between requiring a formal research paper, and doing simple inquiry into a topic. Please note the differences detailed in the following paragraphs. You as the teacher can decide which sort of research you wish to assign, and when.

*A **formal research paper** requires a specified format (so many pages, so many sources, so many paragraphs, etc), a cover page, proper research citation of sources and a bibliography using a specified style (usually ALA or AP), and so forth. It may also require a visual aid or artifact and a presentation or speech. The paper should be edited, revised, and proofread before turning it in. It will take 1-4 weeks and should be a large grade: at least a quiz if not a test grade.*

Refer back to the earlier Lesson on Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel in this book (6.3) for considerable guidance in scheduling, doing, and grading research projects.

***Inquiry research** is simply looking up something to find out more information. No writing is necessarily even required: at most, some notes could be jotted down to use when verbally sharing what was learned with the rest of the class. Inquiry research takes only a few minutes and should not be graded beyond a simple daily grade. The goal with inquiry research is to just have fun finding facts and sharing them with the class.*

1. **Short Historical Research:** Assign teams of 2-4 students to research and present on the following major campaigns of Alexander the Great, paying special attention to the tactics he used and the way he treated the conquered peoples. Require the students to present their findings to the class in a short 3-5 minute presentation, and include a map in the presentation. (No paper is required unless you choose to assign one. Simply have the students practice giving a presentation.)
 - a. Ionia 336 BC
 - b. Media and Egypt 333 BC

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- c. Persia 331 BC
 - d. India 326 BC
 - e. Other research options could be Plutarch himself, King Darius III, the Argead dynasty, and the attempts to assassinate Alexander.
2. **Music:** Have students listen to portions of G F Handel’s two-hour oratorio, *Alexander’s Feast: or, The Power of Music*. [Handel - Alexander's Feast \(Power of Musick\) Part I - YouTube](#) (Jump in at 6:40 to hear the first oratorio. The most famous one, Happy Happy Pair/None But The Brave, begins at 8:15.)
- This work is based on a poem by John Dryden also called *The Power of Music*. In the poem, Dryden discusses how music affects humanity. The oratorio is set at a victory banquet following the defeat of the Persian king Darius. This piece is one of Handel’s most popular and most often revived works during his lifetime. After listening to at least one of the arias, if not the whole selection (38 minutes), ask students to write a paragraph about the effect music has on people.
- Note also the many times that music is mentioned in the story they just read. (Tip: DO NOT tell them this but students will have a lesson on Handel next in this book.)
3. **Geography:** Have students create a map (or mark on a map) all the locations mentioned in the reading from day 2. DO NOT give them this list of locations, but their maps should include the following places: Macedonia, the city of Troy, Asia, Greece, Europe, Persia, the mountains of Cilicia, India, the river Indus, and the city of Babylon.
4. **Poetry:** Investigate the poem, or simply one stanza of the poem, by John Dryden, *The Power of Music*. (This is mentioned in the previous extension) [Golden Treasury of English Songs and Lyrics/Book 2/Poem 116 - Wikisource, the free online library](#) Write a narration of the poem or verses, OR write a paragraph describing the main ideas, and explain whether you agree or disagree with them.
5. **Grammar Praxis extension:** Give students one (or some, or all) of the following sentences and tell them to identify the parts of speech, parts of the sentence, any phrases and/or clauses, and attempt to diagram the sentence(s) for extra grammar practice. Diagramming these could be a challenge. Allow students to work in teams and present their results, if desired. You could give a quiz grade for this.
- a. “A man's worth is not to be reckoned by the valuable coat he wears or the rich villa in which he dwells.”

- b. “He behaved so fairly and courteously to the women, for he was chivalrous, and all of us ought to be like him.”
- c. “A long time did Alexander stand still, after reading these words; for they made him think how soon the great power of kings may vanish away.”
- d. “He became vain, and he became more selfish than he once had been.”
- e. “And where the Greeks went, they took their books and poetry and music, and so gave new ideas and new manners to the folk who were less learned than themselves.”

Part V- Grammar Praxis: Correlative Conjunctions [Required, Same Day or Following]

Review the following information with the students (also in their student books), then have them complete the two short grammar praxis exercises.

We have already studied conjunctions. They connect sentences or clauses. The most common type of conjunction is a coordinating conjunction (remember your mnemonic, FANBOYS) which connects words, phrases, clauses, and whole sentences of equal importance. Subordinating conjunctions connect dependent (subordinate) clauses to independent ones.

Correlative conjunctions make a correlation between two words, ideas, or phrases. They therefore come in pairs and cannot be used without the second half of the pair: hence the term, correlative. The conjunctions *correlate* to one another. The most common of these are **either/or**, and **neither/nor**. Several other less common pairs include:

both/and	not/but	not only/but also	as/as	such/that
rather/than (when separated in a sentence)	no sooner/than	as many/as	as/so <i>can also be</i> just as/so	whether/or

You may note that some correlative conjunctions consist of a coordinating conjunction, which is paired with another (i.e., *but/and*), or with an adjective or an adverb (i.e., *such/that*).

It is the pairing that is most important: the correlation between the words, phrases, or ideas which is shown by the conjunctions.

Optional: show this short video (Just over 3 minutes) from Khan Academy on correlative conjunctions.

[Correlative conjunctions \(video\) | Khan Academy](#)

Praxis Exercise I

Students will find and underline the correlating conjunctions in the following sentences.

Answers are as follows:

1. No sooner had Alexander calmed the beast than he leapt upon his back.
2. Concerning the history of the ancient Greeks, Plutarch is as reliable as any historian could be on such matters.
3. It mattered not whether a person was of kingly status or if they were a mere peasant, they were treated with respect under Alexander.
4. The mother of Alexander both had visions about his birth and saw his future glory before he was even born.
5. Bucephalus not only was strong and fierce, but also loyal only to Alexander.

Praxis Exercise II

Students will write four sentences about Alexander the Great using the correlating conjunctions given. They will underline them in their complete sentences. There are 5 for them to complete in their student books. This can be used as a quiz grade.

Example of the type of sentence they will write in their student books, in this case using the correlative conjunction pair “both/and”: *Alexander was both a conqueror and a military genius.*