Alexander was a prince, the son of the king of Macedonia. He was born in Macedonia in July 356 BCE. Macedonia was not a Greek city-state. It was a country in the north of Greece.

One of Alexander's teachers was [**Aristotle**](http://greece.mrdonn.org/aristotle.html). Aristotle was also born in Macedonia, but he lived for a very long time in ancient Greece.

It was Aristotle, more than any other teacher, who taught Alexander to greatly respect the Greek way of life. Alexander spoke Greek. He knew Greek history. He believed in the Greek gods. When he was a boy, Alexander dreamed of teaching everyone, everywhere, about the wonderful Greek culture he knew and loved so well.

But Alexander was also trained to be a ruler - a ruler and a warrior and a leader of men. He was taught that his job was to expand the Macedonian empire, and to rule at all times with a firm hand.

Alexander's father had conquered most of the Greek city-states before Alexander came to power, including the city-state of Sparta. The Greeks were bitter about the treatment they had received. They hated Alexander's father. When Alexander became king, even though Alexander allowed the Greeks to manage their own city-states, they hated him as well. They fought him at every turn. They lost, but the outposts and colonies especially put up quite a battle. The very people whose culture he loved were Alexander's worst enemies.

Except for the Greek colonies, Alexander conquered other cultures in the Mediterranean rather easily, including Egypt. Everywhere he went, Alexander introduced Greek literature, myth, dance, language, money, medicine, art, and theatre. As he did with the Greeks, he allowed conquered people the opportunity to run their own country as long as they were loyal to Alexander. Those people who refused were killed.

Alexander *never* lost a battle. Before his death, he had built over 70 cities, and had conquered the ENTIRE known world in the Mediterranean region. His empire stretched all the way to the Indus River.

He probably would have pushed on, perhaps even to China, but Alexander died young. One day, he was out boating. He became quite ill and died shortly after. He was only 32 years old. Alexander died in June 323 BCE, about a month before his 33rd birthday.

Although Alexander was not a Greek by birth, scholars today sometimes refer to him as Alexander, the Great Greek. Without Alexander, the Greek culture, which so enriches our lives today, might not have survived or spread to early Rome and beyond.

   