

## 5.5 How “great” was Alexander the Great?

**Do Now:** Read the Brief History of Hanukkah and answer questions 1-3.

### Brief History of Hanukkah

Source: <https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/hanukkah>

The events that inspired the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah occurred about 200 B.C. Judea, the Jewish homeland near contemporary Israel, was controlled of a Greek dynasty. Antiochus IV ordered Jews to worship Greek gods and essentially become Greek. In 168 B.C., a Greek army soldiers attacked the Judea capital of Jerusalem and massacred thousands of people. It desecrated the city’s religious temple, erecting an altar to Zeus and sacrificing pigs, which were considered unclean by the Jews. A local priest and his sons led a Jewish rebellion against Antiochus and forced Hellenization (adopting Green culture). The Jewish resistance successfully drove the Greeks out of Jerusalem and ceremoniously cleansed the temple. Independence was short lived and Judea soon fell under Roman rule.

### Questions

1. Who governed the Jewish homeland of Judea?
2. Why did the Jews rebel?
3. In your opinion, would the local people have been better off accepting or rejecting Greek culture and Hellenization? Explain.

**Instructions:** Alexander the Great Timelines: Working in pairs, examine the map and timeline and answer questions 1-5.



### Questions

1. How were the warring Greek city-states unified into one empire?
2. Why did Greeks believe it was acceptable to force their culture on other people?
3. What happened to Alexander’s empire after his death?
4. What is Hellenization?
5. In your opinion, was Alexander the Great truly great? Explain.

1. Phillip of Macedonia unified warring Greek city-states. His army employed an innovative weapon and strategy. They marched forward with a shield on one arm and carrying a 17-foot spear in the other. It has been called the “lawnmower of death.”

2. Phillip’s son Alexander, born in 356 BC was a student of philosopher Aristotle and considered himself a philosopher. They saw non-Greeks as barbarians who had to be civilized by the Greeks.

3. In 336 BC, at age of 19 Alexander succeeded his father to the throne. He spent most of his career in campaigns to conquer areas of north Africa and southwest Asia. His armies marched as far as India.

4. Alexander became Pharaoh of Egypt, King of Persia, and Lord of Asia. At age of 32 Alexander the Great died while in Babylon. His only potential heir was an unborn baby whose mother was Roxana of Bactria in Persia.

5. The major generals divided up the conquered areas into independent monarchies and declared themselves kings. The newborn baby and potential heir died, probably by assassination.

6. The new monarchies were ruled by Greeks, but their subjects were not Greek. The problem the rulers faced was how to “civilize” their subjects and turn them into Greeks. Their answer was Hellenization. They recruited local elites to adopt Greek culture and language. One strategy was to have Greek soldiers marry local women. Other people were forced to Hellenize when their culture and religious practices were outlawed.

7. Greek culture, Hellenization, became the dominant culture of the Eastern Mediterranean. It remained the language of interaction, government, and trade even after the Greece was conquered by Rome. The Christian New Testament was originally written in Greek.

