



**Literacy Design  
Collaborative**

# Alexander the Great: How Great Was Alexander as a Military Leader?

★ TASK ★ LADDER

by Dan Rau and Chad Thomas

Throughout history, many military leaders have led conquests as a way to increase power and as a result have established an improved status in modern textbooks. Some of the most exceptional of these generals have been assigned the label of “great”. Historians often argue in comparing the greatest of these commanders and whether they deserve such reverence. One of the men that is always used as a standard-bearer is Alexander the Great, because of his success in battle and the influence he had on those the followed. The question really becomes, how “great” was this young Macedonian king?

GRADES

**6 - 8**

DISCIPLINE

 **Social  
Studies**

COURSE

 **Ancient  
World  
History**

PACING

 **N/A**

# *Section 1: What Task?*

## ***Teaching Task***

### ***Task Template 2 - Argumentation***

From a historical perspective, how “great” was Alexander as a military commander? After reading a variety of informational and persuasive texts, write an essay in which you address the question and argue your position. Support your position with evidence from the text(s). Be sure to (acknowledge; refute) competing views. Give multiple example/s from past or current (events; issues) to illustrate and clarify your position.

## ***Standards***

### ***Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects***

#### **CCR.R.1**

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

#### **CCR.R.2**

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

#### **CCR.R.4**

Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

#### **CCR.R.10**

Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

#### **CCR.W.1**

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

#### **CCR.W.4**

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

#### **CCR.W.5**

Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

#### **CCR.W.9**

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

#### **CCR.W.10**

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

## RH.6-8.9

Focus

Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

## WHST.6-8.1

Focus

Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.

### *Academic Standards for History (Secondary)*

## 8.4.9.A

Focus

Compare the role groups and individuals played in the social, political, cultural, and economic development throughout world history.

### *College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards*

## D2.His.3.6-8

Focus

Use questions generated about individuals and groups to analyze why they, and the developments they shaped, are seen as historically significant.

## *Texts*

### Alexander the Great

Junior Scholastic (5/9/2011)—Brown, Bryan The article focuses on Alexander III of Macedonia who is referred as Alexander the Great and notes his successful conquests which laid the foundation of the Western empire which is Rome. 900Lexile

### Alexander the Great

Alexander the Great (2009)—McGill, Sarah Ann Presents a biography of Alexander the Great, King of Macedonia. Background and education; Early military career, and his role in helping his father, King Philip II, gain control of Greece; Details of his extensive military campaign against the Persians; Creation of the city of Alexandria in Egypt; Physical and mental toll of his lifetime of conquest. 990 Lexile

### Alexander the Great

Junior Scholastic (10/31/2005)—Brown, Bryan Presents the life history of Alexander the Great, King of Macedonia. INSET: THINK ABOUT IT. 740 Lexile

### Alexander: the Great Reconciler

Calliope (Sep/Oct90)—Blohm, Craig E. Features Alexander the Great, son of King Philip of Macedonia, and born in 356 B.C. Alexander's defeat of King Darius III of Persia, overthrowing the Persian tyrants and liberating the cities of Asia; Founding of numerous cities which became islands of Greek culture in a sea of Asian customs; Death because of a sudden illness at the age of thirty-two. 1010 Lexile

### **LMS Ancient World History**

## LDC Student Work Rubric - Argumentation

	Not Yet	Approaches Expectations	Meets Expectations	Advanced
	1	2	3	4
<b>Focus</b>	Attempts to address prompt, but lacks focus or is off-task.	Addresses prompt appropriately and establishes a position, but focus is uneven. D: Addresses additional demands superficially.	Addresses prompt appropriately and maintains a clear, steady focus. Provides a generally convincing position. D: Addresses additional demands sufficiently	Addresses all aspects of prompt appropriately with a consistently strong focus and convincing position. D: Addresses additional demands with thoroughness and makes a connection to claim.
<b>Controlling Idea</b>	Attempts to establish a claim, but lacks a clear purpose.	Establishes a claim.	Establishes a credible claim.	Establishes and maintains a substantive and credible claim or proposal.
<b>Reading/Research</b>	Attempts to reference reading materials to develop response, but lacks connections or relevance to the purpose of the prompt.	Presents information from reading materials relevant to the purpose of the prompt with minor lapses in accuracy or completeness.	Accurately presents details from reading materials relevant to the purpose of the prompt to develop argument or claim.	Accurately and effectively presents important details from reading materials to develop argument or claim.
<b>Development</b>	Attempts to provide details in response to the prompt, but lacks sufficient development or relevance to the purpose of the prompt.	Presents appropriate details to support and develop the focus, controlling idea, or claim, with minor lapses in the reasoning, examples, or explanations.	Presents appropriate and sufficient details to support and develop the focus, controlling idea, or claim.	Presents thorough and detailed information to effectively support and develop the focus, controlling idea, or claim.
<b>Organization</b>	Attempts to organize ideas, but lacks control of structure.	Uses an appropriate organizational structure for development of reasoning and logic, with minor lapses in structure and/or coherence.	Maintains an appropriate organizational structure to address specific requirements of the prompt. Structure reveals the reasoning and logic of the argument.	Maintains an organizational structure that intentionally and effectively enhances the presentation of information as required by the specific prompt. Structure enhances development of the reasoning and logic of the argument.
<b>Conventions</b>	Attempts to demonstrate standard English conventions, but lacks cohesion and control of grammar, usage, and mechanics. Sources are used without citation.	Demonstrates an uneven command of standard English conventions and cohesion. Uses language and tone with some inaccurate, inappropriate, or uneven features. Inconsistently cites sources.	Demonstrates a command of standard English conventions and cohesion, with few errors. Response includes language and tone appropriate to the audience, purpose, and specific requirements of the prompt. Cites sources using appropriate format with only minor errors.	Demonstrates and maintains a well-developed command of standard English conventions and cohesion, with few errors. Response includes language and tone consistently appropriate to the audience, purpose, and specific requirements of the prompt. Consistently cites sources using appropriate format.
<b>Content Understanding</b>	Attempts to include disciplinary content in argument, but understanding of content is weak; content is irrelevant, inappropriate, or inaccurate.	Briefly notes disciplinary content relevant to the prompt; shows basic or uneven understanding of content; minor errors in explanation.	Accurately presents disciplinary content relevant to the prompt with sufficient explanations that demonstrate understanding.	Integrates relevant and accurate disciplinary content with thorough explanations that demonstrate in-depth understanding.

### ***Background for Students***

Military leaders are typically judged on how many victories they have accumulated during their career. However, there are other factors that should be examined when determining how good or bad a person is as a military leader. Currently, the opinion of Alexander is that he was great, but was he?

### ***Extension***

Not provided

## *Section 2: What Skills?*

### ***Preparing for the Task***

**BRIDGING CONVERSATION > TASK ENGAGEMENT:** Ability to connect the task and new content to existing knowledge, skills, experiences, interests, and concerns.

**TASK AND RUBRIC ANALYSIS > TASK ANALYSIS:** Ability to understand and explain the task's prompt and rubric.

### ***Reading Process***

**PRE-READING > TEXT SELECTION:** Ability to identify appropriate texts.

**PRE-READING > ESSENTIAL VOCABULARY:** Ability to apply strategies for developing an understanding of text(s) by locating words and phrases that identify key concepts and facts, or information.

**ACTIVE READING: IDENTIFYING CENTRAL IDEAS:** Ability to identify the central point and main supporting elements of a text.

**ACTIVE READING > NOTE-TAKING:** Ability to select important facts and passages for use in one's own writing.

**POST-READING > ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** Ability to use and credit sources appropriately.

### ***Transition to Writing***

**BRIDGING CONVERSATION > PREPARING FOR WRITING:** Ability to begin linking reading results to writing task.

### ***Writing Process***

**INITIATION OF TASK > ESTABLISHING THE CONTROLLING IDEA:** Ability to establish a claim and consolidate information relevant to task.

**PLANNING > PLANNING THE WRITING:** Ability to develop a line of thought and text structure appropriate to an argumentation task.

**DEVELOPING:** Ability to construct an initial draft with an emerging line of thought and structure.

**REVISION, EDITING, AND COMPLETION > REVISION:** Ability to refine text, including line of thought, language usage, and tone as appropriate to audience and purpose.

## Section 3: What Instruction?

PACING	SKILL AND DEFINITION	PRODUCT AND PROMPT	SCORING GUIDE	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES
<b>Preparing for the Task</b>				
Not provided	<b>BRIDGING CONVERSATION &gt; TASK ENGAGEMENT:</b> Ability to connect the task and new content to existing knowledge, skills, experiences, interests, and concerns.	<b>SHORT CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE</b> In a quick write, write your first reaction to the task prompt. Add some notes of things you know about Alexander the Great.	None provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Link this task to earlier class content</li> <li>Discuss student responses.</li> <li>Clarify timetable and support plans for the task.</li> </ul>
Not provided	<b>TASK AND RUBRIC ANALYSIS &gt; TASK ANALYSIS:</b> Ability to understand and explain the task's prompt and rubric.	<b>SHORT CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE</b> In your words, what should be included in a good response to this prompt	None provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share examples of type of text students will produce (either from past students or from professional writers).</li> <li>Identify or invite students to identify key features of examples.</li> <li>Pair students to share and improve their individual bullets.</li> <li>Create a classroom list: choose one student to share a few ideas on the board, and ask others to add to it.</li> </ul>
<b>Reading Process</b>				
Not provided	<b>PRE-READING &gt; TEXT SELECTION:</b> Ability to identify appropriate texts.	<b>LIST</b> For each text, list the needed bibliographic information. Add bullets on why you think the work is credible and/or worthy of study.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies author, title, publisher, date and any other needed information (for example, the volume for a periodical or the editor for an anthology).</li> <li>Includes reasonable evidence that work is credible and/or worthy of study.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide citation guide and discuss why each element of citation is needed.</li> <li>Ask students to brainstorm what makes an author credible and/or worthy of study.</li> <li>Provide access to research sources for students to assess the texts.</li> <li>Note: for an "after-researching" task, add teaching and time for students to select the texts that they will use.</li> </ul>
Not provided	<b>PRE-READING &gt; ESSENTIAL VOCABULARY:</b> Ability to apply strategies for developing an understanding of text(s) by locating words and phrases that identify key concepts	<b>LIST</b> In your notebook, list words and phrases essential to the texts. Add definitions, and (if appropriate) note on connotation in this context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides accurate definition</li> <li>Lists several appropriate strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>After scoring, ask some students to share definitions of terms that others overlooked or misunderstood.</li> </ul>

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	and facts, or information.			
2 hrs and 30 mins	<b>ACTIVE READING: IDENTIFYING CENTRAL IDEAS:</b> Ability to identify the central point and main supporting elements of a text.	<b>NOTES</b> What are the key points of the article that will aid you in creating a valid response to the prompt?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answers question with a credible response.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invite students to brainstorm different ways to figure out the author's intent.</li> <li>Invite students to share and discuss their answers for each text.</li> <li>After the discussion, allow them to add to their entries.</li> </ul>
Not provided	<b>ACTIVE READING &gt; NOTE-TAKING:</b> Ability to select important facts and passages for use in one's own writing.	<b>NOTE TAKING FORMAT/LIST</b> From each text, make a list of the elements that look most important for answering the prompt. Do what you need to do to avoid plagiarism. * L2(a) What strategies will you use to discern "credible sources"? * L2(b): What implications can your draw? (Tasks 11,12 ) * L3 Why is it important in the process of inquiry to "identify gaps" or "unanswered questions" about the topic?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies relevant elements.</li> <li>Includes information to support accurate citation (for example, page numbers for a long text, clear indication when quoting directly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach a model format for note taking.</li> <li>Check that early student work is in the assigned format (or in another format that gathers the needed information effectively).</li> </ul>
Not provided	<b>POST-READING &gt; ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:</b> Ability to use and credit sources appropriately.	<b>LIST</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define, "plagiarism" and list ways to avoid it.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides accurate definition</li> <li>List several appropriate strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss respect for others' work to assemble evidence and create texts.</li> <li>Discuss academic penalties for stealing others thoughts and words.</li> </ul>
<b>Transition to Writing</b>				
Not provided	<b>BRIDGING CONVERSATION &gt; PREPARING FOR WRITING:</b> Ability to begin linking reading results to writing task.	<b>SHORT CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE</b> In a quick write, reflect on what you already know that will help you respond to the prompt.	Teacher discretion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion-based strategies, such as seminar.</li> <li>Small group discussion using question.</li> </ul>
<b>Writing Process</b>				
Not provided	<b>INITIATION OF TASK &gt; ESTABLISHING THE CONTROLLING IDEA:</b> Ability to establish a claim and consolidate information relevant to task.	<b>SHORT CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE</b> Write a thesis statement that clearly takes the position you have chosen to argue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writes a concise thesis statement.</li> <li>Establishes a controlling idea.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer several examples of a thesis statement.</li> <li>Ask class to discuss what makes them strong or weak.</li> </ul>
Not provided	<b>PLANNING &gt; PLANNING THE WRITING:</b> Ability to develop a line of thought and text	<b>OUTLINE</b> Create an outline based on your notes and reading in which you state your claim, sequence your	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creates an outline or organizer.</li> <li>Supports controlling idea.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide and teach one or more examples of outlines or organizers.</li> <li>Invite students to generate questions in pairs about how the format works, and then take and answer</li> </ul>



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	structure appropriate to an argumentation task.	points, and note your supporting evidence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses evidence from texts read earlier.</li> </ul>	questions.
Not provided	<b>DEVELOPING:</b> Ability to construct an initial draft with an emerging line of thought and structure.	<b>LONG CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE</b> Write an initial draft complete with opening, development, and closing; insert and cite textual evidence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides complete draft with all parts.</li> <li>• Supports the opening in the later sections with evidence and citations.</li> </ul>	Encourage students to re-read prompt partway through writing, to check that they are on track.
Not provided	<b>REVISION, EDITING, AND COMPLETION &gt; REVISION:</b> Ability to refine text, including line of thought, language usage, and tone as appropriate to audience and purpose.	<b>REVISION: LONG CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refine composition's analysis, logic, and organization of ideas/points.</li> <li>• Use textual evidence carefully, with accurate citations.</li> <li>• Decide what to include and what not to include.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides complete draft with all parts.</li> <li>• Supports the opening in the later sections with evidence and citations.</li> <li>• Improves earlier edition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sample useful feedback that balances support for strengths and clarity about weaknesses.</li> <li>• Assign students to provide each other with feedback on those issues.</li> </ul>
Not provided	<b>REVISION, EDITING, AND COMPLETION &gt; REVISION:</b> Ability to refine text, including line of thought, language usage, and tone as appropriate to audience and purpose.	<b>EDITING: LONG CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise draft to have sound spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar.</li> <li>• Adjust formatting as needed to provide clear, appealing text.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides draft free from distracting surface errors.</li> <li>• Uses format that supports purpose.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Briefly review selected skills that many students need to improve.</li> <li>• Teach a short list of proofreading marks.</li> <li>• Assign students to proofread each other's texts a second time.</li> </ul>
Not provided	<b>REVISION, EDITING, AND COMPLETION &gt; REVISION:</b> Ability to refine text, including line of thought, language usage, and tone as appropriate to audience and purpose.	<b>COMPLETION: LONG CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turn in your complete set of drafts, plus the final version of your piece.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fits the "Meets Expectations" category in the rubric for the teaching task.</li> </ul>	None

## Instructional Resources

No resources specified

## *Section 4: What Results?*

### ***Student Work Samples***

#### ***Not Yet***

 **Alexander the Great "Not Yet" Example**

#### ***Approaches Expectations***

 **Alexander the Great "Approaches Expectations" example**

#### ***Meets Expectations***

 **Alexander the Great "Meets Expectations" Example**

#### ***Advanced***

 **Alexander the Great "Advanced" Example**

### ***Teacher Reflection***

- Lexile measures provided were computed automatically and did not undergo human review as such they are not certified measures and should not be published or recorded in any way.
- Please see the wiki page link provided to students to aid in the research and writing process.

## ***All Attachments***

🔗 LMS Ancient World History : <https://s ldc.org/u/9ma0euiivqk8987i25lb25d4r>

📄 Alexander the Great "Not Yet" Example : <https://s ldc.org/u/2kq3bmw6mc7sz4vf67aztk1i1>

📄 Alexander the Great "Approaches Expectations" example :  
<https://s ldc.org/u/5ddjmwg6v27b3pv5fdtdjdv2t>

📄 Alexander the Great "Meets Expectations" Example :  
<https://s ldc.org/u/840fxk53rqtgwtb xuzsjwmne>

📄 Alexander the Great "Advanced" Example : <https://s ldc.org/u/8bmri8jjm4ztauk4lvu8pidm1>