

THE WAR HORSE IN ANCIENT GREECE AND ROME



Four Horse Chariot Race at The Library of Congress

This educational packet is intended for 7th grade social studies students. Students will learn about how horses were used in battle in Ancient Rome and Ancient Greece. Students will also learn about Alexander the Great, and how he used horses.

Name: _____

Date: _____



For teachers: Common Core Standards

SS-7-GC-S-1 (b)

Students will demonstrate an understanding (e.g., speak, draw, write, projects, present) of the nature of the nature of government: compare different forms of government, and the purposes and sources of power in the most common forms of government (e.g., monarchy, democracy, republic, dictatorship) in world civilizations prior to 1500 A.D.

SS-7-GC-S-1 (c)

Students will demonstrate an understanding (e.g., speak, draw, write, projects, present) of the nature of government: analyze how some world civilizations prior to 1500 A.D.. (e.g. Greece, Rome) demonstrated the use of democratic principles (e.g., justice, equality, responsibility, freedom)

SS-7-CS-S-4

Students will describe conflicts between individuals or groups and explain how compromise and cooperation were possible choices to resolve conflict among individuals and groups in world civilizations prior to 1500 A.D.

SS-7-3.1.1

Students will explain and give examples of how scarcity required individuals, groups and governments in early civilizations prior to 1500 A.D. to make decisions about how productive resources (natural resources, human resources, capital goods) were used.

AH-7-PCA-S-VA2

Students will create new, choose and experience artworks created to fulfill a variety of specific purposes

AH-7-PA-S-VA2

Students will use knowledge of the elements and principles of art and art terminology to:

- create expressive artworks
- describe and critique their own work and the work of others



INTRODUCTION OF THE HORSE TO BATTLE

Horses were common in Ancient Greece, but they were very expensive to buy and maintain. Some horses were so prized that they ate wheat instead of barley and drank wine instead of water. Because horses were so expensive, they were not used in the military until Alexander the Great made them **commonplace**. Horses were first used to pull chariots into battle around 1500 BCE, but people did not start riding into battle on horseback until 900 BCE. While the Greeks were not the first to ride on a horse, Alexander the Great used this **tactic** in his military **campaigns** much more than leaders before him.



Before horses were used in actual fighting they were ridden by soldiers to gather **reconnaissance**. The riders would try to find the opposing army and gather information about the size of the army and the weapons they had. Horses were also used to haul equipment to and from the battle.

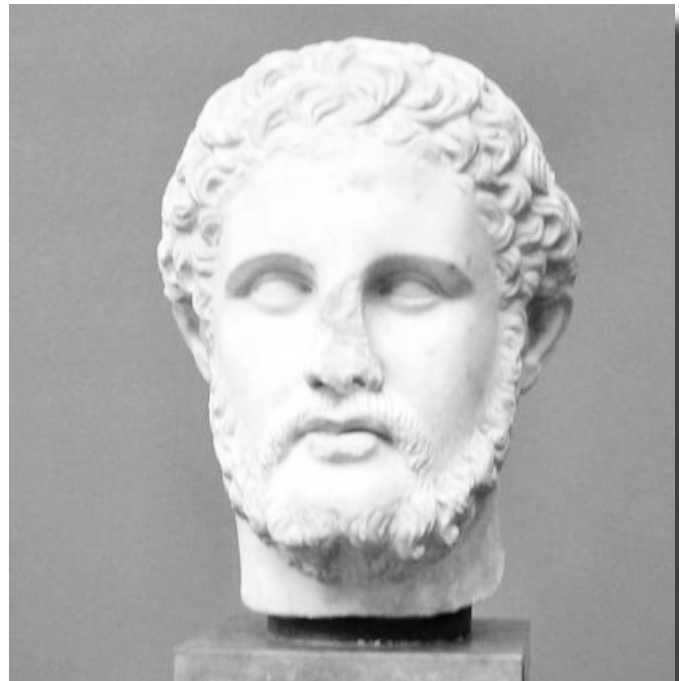
CHARIOTS



Chariots were normally used in parades and celebrations. However when used in battle, they were easily defeated if the enemy could attack before the chariots could get up to full speed. Since the horses had to pull so much weight, it could take a while for the horses to get to their maximum speed. This weakness is a reason for the switch from chariot warfare to horseback.

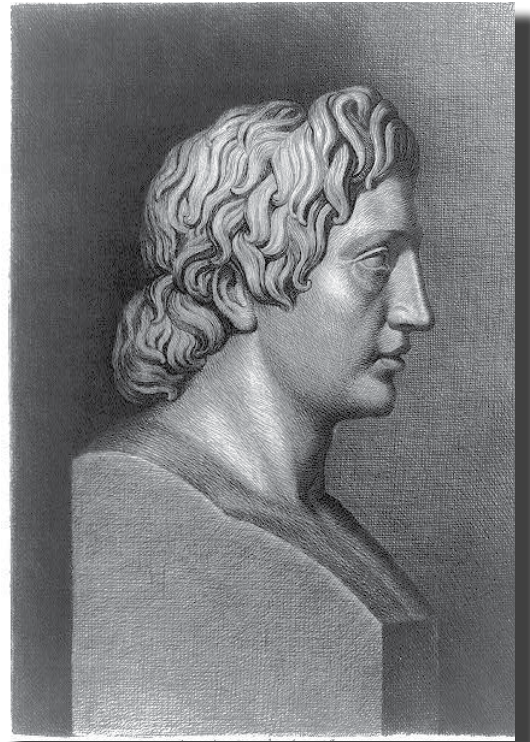
PHILLIP II

Phillip II, Alexander the Great's father, is credited with first using cavalry to charge at an opponent. Previously, soldiers on horseback would separate and fight on their own. With this development, Alexander could use the cavalry as a **decisive** force in his battles.



ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Alexander the Great was the son of Phillip II who ruled the Macedonian kingdom, which was located in northern Greece. Alexander was a student of the philosopher Aristotle and was a very gifted military leader. When he became king he spread his empire all the way from Greece to India and Egypt. Eventually Alexander began to think of himself as the son of **Zeus** but died before he could create his intended empire. He was the first military ruler to use horses in battle as a way to scare the enemy and break their formation, making the enemy easier to defeat.



Alexander the Great by Jacques Reich at The Library of Congress

HOW TO RIDE A HORSE IN ANCIENT GREECE AND ROME

1. There were no saddles during this time, so the rider sat on a blanket on the horse's back. This could be dangerous because the blankets were so slippery.
2. There were no stirrups during this time either, so riders had to hug onto the belly of the horse with their legs, and hope they didn't fall off.
3. If a rider was in battle, they had to make sure they would hit their target with their weapon, or else the motion would cause them to fall off.
4. Ancient riders did not have a lot of control over where their horses went, so riders had to hope their horses would move in the right direction.

DID YOU KNOW?

Alexander was a boy when he met Bucephalus. The horse was said to have been untamable, but when Alexander approached him, the two quickly bonded. Alexander rode Bucephalus into battle many times until the horse died from a fatal wound at the Battle of Hydaspes. After this, Alexander founded a city named Bucephala, **commemorating** his horse. This city was the only city of the 70 cities founded by Alexander that he did not name after himself.



Alexander and Bucephalus at the Battle of Issus.

Scala/EPA, Inc.



The Phalanx Attacking the Centre in the Battle of the Hydaspes by Andre Castaigne

Horses weren't the only animal used in combat. Greeks used elephants in special occasions. At the Battle of Heraclea in 280 BC, a Greek king, King Pyrrhus brought 20 war elephants to fight the Romans. The Romans were unprepared for these huge animals and the Greeks defeated them. The next year, when fighting began between the two forces again, the Romans were ready with fire to scare the elephants, and **javelin** throwers to defeat these large animals.

VOCABULARY

CAMPAIGN

a series of military operations in a particular area or for a particular purpose as a part of war.

COMMEMORATING

to be a memorial of.

COMMONPLACE

a usual or ordinary thing.

DECISIVE

unmistakeable, unquestionable.

JAVELIN

a weapon with a long straight handle and sharp head or blade

RECONNAISSANCE

a survey of enemy territory to gain information.

TACTIC

a method of arranging and moving forces in combat.

ZEUS

the chief god, ruler of the sky and weather, and husband of Hera in Greek mythology.



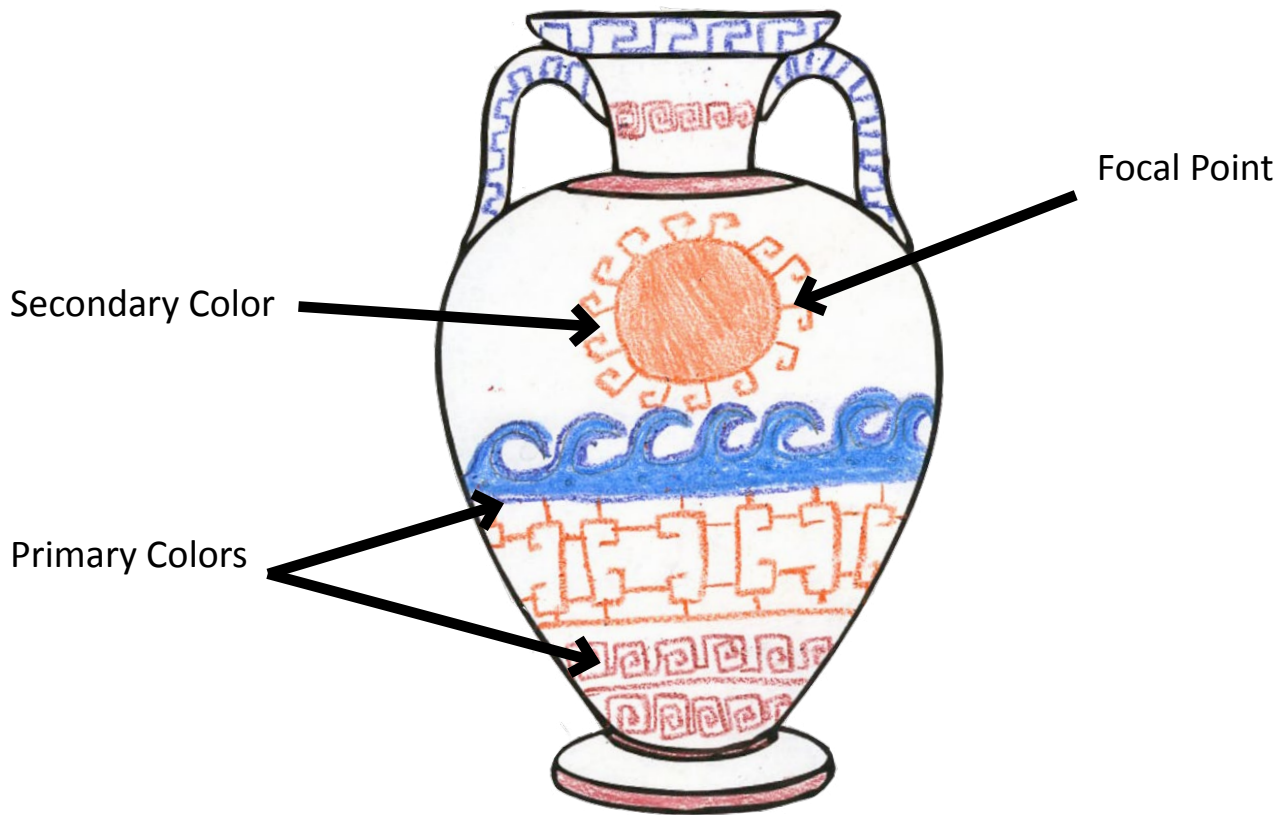
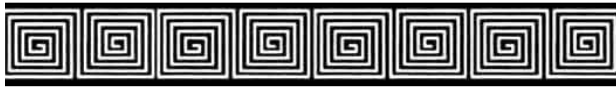
WRITING

The year is 360 B.C. and you are a horse in Alexander the Great's army. You are traveling to and participating in a battle. What is the most challenging part about the journey? Is there anything fun about the battle? Do you like being a war horse or would you rather be a farm horse? Write your answer on a separate sheet of paper.



ART

Use these patterns to decorate the Greek pot on the next page. Color your pot with two primary colors and one secondary color. Make sure your pot has a focal point!



Name: _____

Date: _____

