Primary Source Activity
GREEK CIVILIZATION

Lesson 3 Alexander’s Empire

Alexander the Great: Hero or Villain?

The name Alexander the Great would make you think that Alexander was indeed great. Some historians claim he brought progress, order, and culture to the lands he conquered. They refer to stories that he tried to promote learning, visited all of his wounded men after each battle, spared the lives of the queen and princess of Persia, and built new cities where others had been destroyed.

However, many people see him as cruel—a tyrant and a murderer. As evidence for that point of view, some historians point to stories that he treated the people he enslaved harshly and ordered the murder of several close advisers. In battle, Alexander could be ruthless, as when he conquered the city of Tyre. According to some accounts, he ordered the killing of 9,000 people and he enslaved 13,000 others.

Directions: Read the following quotation about Alexander.
1. **Identifying** According to the reading, how many captives did Alexander take at Tyre?

2. **Explaining** What did Alexander do with the women and children of Tyre?

3. **Making Generalizations** Were the Tyrians brave or cowardly? Support your answer with evidence from the reading.

4. **Explaining** Why do some historians refer to Alexander as “Great”?
5. Critical Thinking
   **Inferring** Do Alexander's actions in Tyre change your opinion of him as a great leader? Why or why not?