The Hellenistic World
ALEXANDER THE GREAT

- In 11 years, he conquered Greece, Persia, Egypt, and even expanded to western India in what was the biggest empire of the time.
- Alexander had plans to construct new cities, roads, and harbors, and continue expansion (possibly into Arabia), but he died before he got the chance in 323 BCE.
- Alexander was more interested in expanding his empire than governing it.
- When Alexander died, Macedonian generals fought for control of the empire.
- His empire was split 3 ways among 3 of his generals:
  - **Ptolemy** seized Egypt
  - **Seleucus** took control of Persia (became the **Seleucid Kingdom**)
  - **Antigonus** became king of Macedonia and took control of Greece.

*Ignored the democratic traditions of Greece- governed with complete power over their subjects!*
Breakup of Alexander’s Empire
THE SPREAD OF HELLENISTIC CULTURE

● As he expanded his empire, Alexander sought to blend the conquered cultures with Greek culture.
● Alexander established many new cities as administrative centers and outposts of Greek culture (such as the many cities throughout the empire named *Alexandria*, like the one in Egypt)
● These new cities adopted many Greek patterns and customs, and even after Alexander’s death, these cities continued to be linked through trade, Greek culture, and a shared language (*koine*, a common dialect of Greek).
● Each city still had its own unique features, just blended with Greek culture.
THE SPREAD OF HELLENISTIC CULTURE

- Greek (also called Hellenic) culture blended with Egyptian, Persian, and Indian influences, a blending which came to be known as Hellenistic culture.
- Alexandria in Egypt became the foremost center of commerce and Hellenistic civilization.
How was Alexandria’s location in Egypt strategic?

How did this location enable it to become an city with international influences?
ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT- A HELLENISTIC CITY

- Broad avenues were lined with statues of Greek gods
- Famous for its museum and library- contained art galleries, botanical gardens, and was an institute of advanced study. The library contained several famous works of the ancient world. It was the first true research library in the world, and helped to promote the work of scholars.
CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE HELLENISTIC ERA

- Hellenistic scholars, especially those in Alexandria, built on the achievements of earlier Greek thinkers, who themselves were influenced by nearby Babylonian and Egyptian cultures.

- Achievements in math and science include:
  - **Astronomy** - At observatories, astronomers studied the stars and planets. Aristarchus of Samos correctly hypothesized that the sun was much bigger in size than the Earth, and also correctly hypothesized that the Earth revolves around the sun. However, another astronomer, Ptolemy, hypothesized that the Earth was the center of the solar system - this view was accepted for another 14 centuries. Eratosthenes tried to calculate Earth’s true size using geometry and came within 5,000 miles of the true circumference of Earth.
CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE HELLENISTIC ERA

● Achievements in math and science include:
  ○ Geometry- Euclid compiled a well-known book on geometry, which is still the basis for many courses in geometry.
  ○ Mathematics and Physics- Archimedes studied at Alexandria and accurately estimated the value of \( \pi \), explained the law of the lever, and invented the compound pulley to lift heavy objects. Hellenistic scientists used his ideas to later build a force pump, pneumatic machine, and even a steam engine.
CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE HELLENISTIC ERA

- Achievements in art and philosophy include:
  - Sculpture flourished during the Hellenistic era- statues were purchased to honor gods and commemorate heroes
  - Statues often portrayed more natural works than earlier, more ideal and harmonic works of the classical age.
  - The largest known Hellenistic statue was the Colossus of Rhodes, a bronze statue built to commemorate a Greek naval victory.
  - Philosophy- Socrates, Plato and Aristotle continued to be influential, but there were new schools of thought, including:
    - Stoicism
    - Epicurianism
END OF THE HELLENISTIC ERA

- The Hellenistic world fell into decline by 150 BCE as the Roman Empire became powerful. Greece and much of the Hellenistic world would be incorporated into the Roman Empire.
ASSIGNMENT- DUE THURSDAY 9/14!

Answer these questions on a sheet of paper:

1. Compare and contrast the Persian Empire and Greece.
2. Compare and contrast Athens and Sparta.
3. CCOT for Greece- what continued over time? What changed?
4. Causation- what led to the rise of Alexander? What enabled him to create his empire?