Lesson 5  Alexander and the Hellenistic Era

A. 1. The Greeks viewed the Macedonians from the north as barbarians.

A.2. Alexander was motivated by the desire for glory and empire but also by the desire to avenge the Persian burning of Athens in 480 B.C.

A.3. By the time he died in 323 B.C., Alexander’s conquests included the Persian Empire and extended north to present-day Pakistan and west as far as India.

A.4. Alexander extended Greek and Macedonian rule over a vast area. He also spread Greek language, architecture, literature, art, and religious diversity, which blended with aspects of Eastern culture to become a new Hellenistic culture.

B. 1. The word Hellenistic is derived from Greek roots, meaning “to imitate Greeks.”

B.2. Hellenistic rulers relied on Greeks and Macedonians to form the new ruling class. They also encouraged a spread of Greek colonists to Southwest Asia.

B.3. Alexandria became home to poets, writers, philosophers, scientists, sculptors, and architects and boasted a library with more than 500,000 scrolls.

B.4. The Hellenistic Era saw advances in astronomy, mathematics, and philosophy.

Summary and Reflection

A complete answer should include: Alexander the Great had planned to unify the Macedonians, Greeks, and Persians by appointing officials from all three groups and by encouraging his soldiers to marry native women; the Hellenistic monarchs who succeeded him followed his lead in establishing a series of new cities and military settlements, but they emphasized Greek culture; they relied only on Greeks and Macedonians to form the new ruling class, and all government business was transacted in Greek.