

WORLD HISTORY READERS

Level 1-0

The Persian Empire

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Seed
Learning



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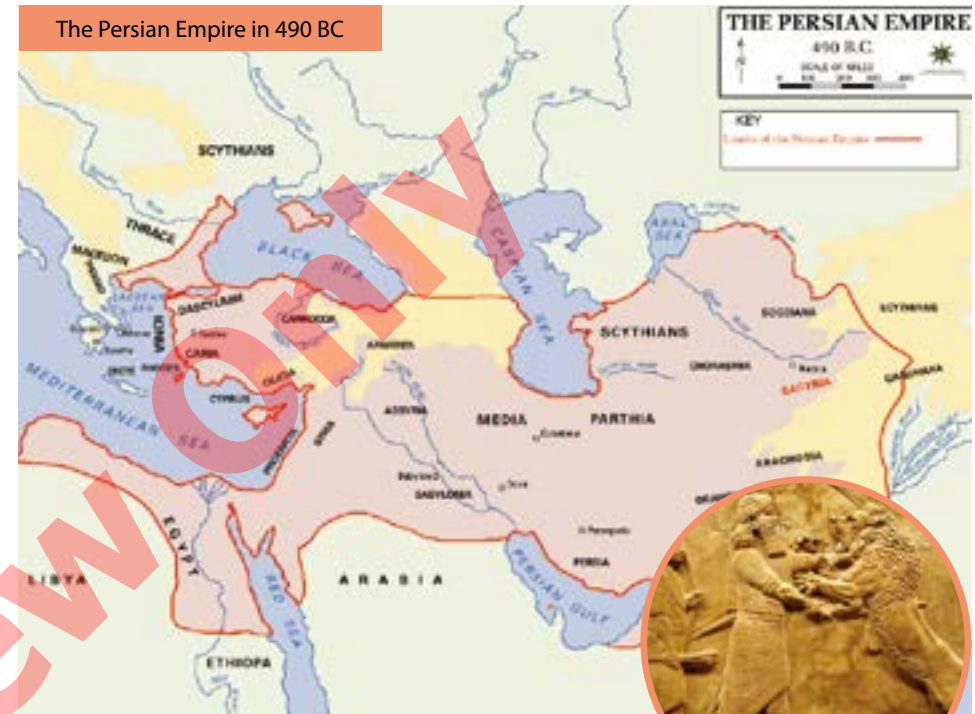
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The Biggest Empire the World Had Ever Seen

Everyone has heard of the ancient Greek Empire of 2,500 years ago, but very few people know the story of their enemies, the Persians from modern-day Iran.



A Greek vase



A warrior killing a lion

For almost two hundred years, from 550 BC to 330 BC, the Persian Empire was the most powerful state in the world. It went from Iran to Egypt, and from eastern Europe to India covering 44% of the world's people, or about 50 million people.



Modern Tehran, Iran



The Acropolis in Athens, Greece

Cyrus II

2,600 years ago, Persia was made up of different states, each with their own leaders. By 554 BC, Cyrus II, the King of Persia united them all to create one empire.

Around 546 BC, Cyrus began building the huge city of Pasargadae, now in modern-day Iran.



Buildings at Pasargadae



Cyrus the Great Monument



The Palace of Cyrus at Pasargadae



Restored ruins of Babylon, Iran

Unlike previous kings, Cyrus was known for kindness, not cruelty. For example, after attacking Babylon, he did not kill the people there. He was kind and generous.

Cyrus understood the history of these people and allowed them to be free if they would accept him as their king.



The tomb of Cyrus, Pasargadae



Image of Ancient Babylon

Darius I

Darius I (550 - 486 BC) became the leader after Cyrus died. He wanted to build trade in the empire, so he became a great administrator.

He created new ways to collect taxes, allowed the states in his empire to have some control, and created a common set of laws to help expand trade.



Darius I



The ruins of Persepolis, Iran



A stone image of people, Persepolis

Darius the Great became one of the greatest builders of all time. He built temples in Egypt and in many cities such as Persepolis and Susa in modern-day Iran.



Traditional Iranian market



Market in Shiraz, Iran



Ancient palace in Susa, Iran

Comprehension Questions

1. The Persian Empire covered... of the world's population.
(a) 20%
(b) 24%
(c) 34%
(d) 44%
2. The Persian Empire started in ... and lasted to...
(a) 330 BC ... 550 BC
(b) 550 BC ... 330 BC
(c) 490 BC ... 450 BC
(d) 490 BC ... 554 BC
3. Which city did Cyrus II attack?
(a) Pasargadae
(b) Percepolis
(c) Babylon
(d) Susa
4. Cyrus II was known as a ... king.
(a) bad
(b) kind
(c) evil
(d) free
5. Darius I did NOT...
(a) make a common set of laws.
(b) change the tax system.
(c) build temples.
(d) kill his father.
6. Xerxes was Darius's...
(a) son.
(b) father.
(c) brother.
(d) friend.
7. The Royal Road was ... long.
(a) about 500 km
(b) about 800 km
(c) about 1,500 km
(d) 5,000 km
8. Which battle did the Persians win?
(a) Marathon
(b) Salamis
(c) Thermopylae
(d) All of these
9. The battle of Salamis...
(a) was fought on ships.
(b) was not so important.
(c) did not really happen.
(d) spread Persian culture.
10. Who followed Cyrus's and Darius's ideas?
(a) The Romans
(b) Alexander the Great
(c) Greek Kings
(d) All of these

Glossary

- **administrator** a person who controls or manages something
- **ancient** very old
- **army** a large group of soldiers
- **battle** a big fight between two groups of soldiers
- **communicate** to talk or write to someone to share information
- **cruelty** very mean or unkind behavior
- **defeat** to beat your rival in a fight or competition
- **empire** a group of countries ruled by one nation
- **escape** to run away
- **expand** to make larger and/or wider
- **fair** treating everyone in the same way
- **generous** kind; willing to forgive
- **modern** recent; of the time now
- **powerful** very strong
- **spread** to move widely in different directions
- **trade** the buying and selling of goods and services
- **unite** to bring together under one person's control