

Book Notes

Alexander and the Stallion

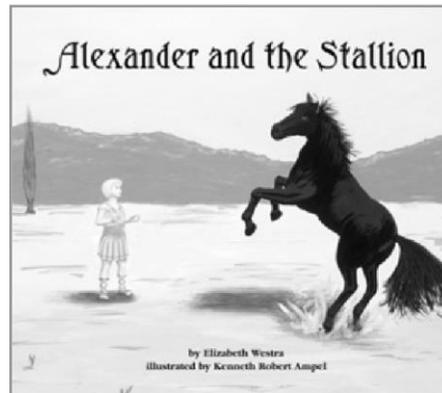
Author Elizabeth Westra

Illustrator Kenneth Robert Ampel

16 pages ■ 434 words

Fountas and Pinnell Level M

Intervention Level 23



Alexander and the Stallion

SYNOPSIS

As a young boy, Alexander the Great, exhibiting intelligence and bravery, tames a wild and beautiful horse that grown men are not able to train. The horse, Bucephalus, becomes Alexander's trusted war horse.

WHAT THE BOOK OFFERS

- Legend that can be confirmed with historical links
- Third person
- Past tense
- Map and extra historical information on inside back cover
- Pronunciation key in nonfiction note on inside back cover
- Unfamiliar vocabulary
- Unfamiliar content
- More complex sentence structure
- Use of dialogue to move the story along
- Longer text
- Geography
- Pictures support reader in establishing setting in history
- Examples of comma use to set off elements that interrupt or add information to a sentence
- Opportunity for decoding unfamiliar and longer words through syllabication

POSSIBLE SKILLS EMPHASIS

- More sophisticated content
- Establishing background for unfamiliar content using illustrations and reader's knowledge of the genre of legends
- Understanding historically based legends
- Using punctuation to aid fluency and comprehension—dialogue, commas
- Understanding new vocabulary in context
- Opportunity for character study
- Clues in story for reader that require reader involvement beyond literal interpretation
- Noticing author's use of adjectives—powerful word choice
- Opportunity to return to text to support discussion points

Alexander and the Stallion (continued)

INTRODUCING THE BOOK

Cover and title page: *Where do you think the setting for this story might be?*

- Can students support each other with the connections they make, using the illustrations to predict the setting and time frame of the story?
- If students do not have some frame of reference, provide some support here.

FOCUS OF INSTRUCTION

- Break the text into the following pieces for silent reading, discussion, and/or summarizing.

- Through page 5: Stop to discuss students' predictions—were they accurate?

Pages 7 through 9: *What do you think about Alexander as a person? How does the author let us know about his character?*

Through page 11: *Based on Alexander's character, how do you think he is going to try to tame the horse? Do you think he will succeed?*

After reading page 15: *Find the clue the author gives the reader on page 14 to help the reader predict that the horse was afraid of his shadow. ("He kept the stallion facing the sun.") What else were you thinking at this point in the story?*

- Read and discuss page 16. Did students know that this was a story about a real person? Do they think the story itself is real or legend?

What parts are probably real? Can the nonfiction note help us figure that out?

- Read the nonfiction note for the historical information on which this legend is based.

- Character study: students revisit the book and list some characteristics of Alexander as a person, as seen through his actions and dialogue. Students can mark the spot they found in the book for group discussion or write a response for later sharing.

FOLLOWING THE READING

Writing connection: *How did the author let us know about the character of Alexander? What are the implications for our own writing? Write a short piece about someone you know, attempting to describe his or her character through action and dialogue rather than direct statements.*

Historical perspective: *Compare the map in the book with a map from present day. How much of the known world did Alexander conquer?*

Have students find other sources about Alexander and the ancient Greeks. *Using information learned from the text, compare and contrast differences in ways we live now versus Alexander's time.*



Book Notes

Alexander and the Stallion (continued)

Additional Comprehension Prompts For Oral or Written Use Before, During, and After Reading	
FINISH THIS THOUGHT	<i>The problem in this story was . . . Alexander solved the problem by . . .</i>
USE YOUR MEMORY	<i>What was the name of the mighty black war-horse who was the main character in this book? Where does it tell you his name? Where did this story take place? What was the name of the King? Check page 2 and see if your answers were correct.</i>
WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?	<i>Why do you think Alexander whispered something to the black stallion? Did it work? How so? If you were Alexander, would you have tamed this horse or not? Why or why not?</i>
BE CREATIVE	<i>Review the map on the inside back cover and read the information in the Nonfiction Note box. Write down 3 things you learned about Alexander the Great, in your own words. Write down 3 things you learned about Bucephalus, in your own words. Don't copy what is there.</i>
VOCABULARY AGENT	<i>Use a thesaurus to find another word that means the same thing as each of the words below: *beautiful *excitement *wild *mighty *mumble *tame *tremble *afraid *prod</i>