PHILOSOPHERS SEARCH FOR TRUTH
The following men were determined to seek the truth, no matter where the search led them. The Greeks called such thinkers philosophers, meaning “lovers of wisdom.”

Socrates
469–399 B.C.
Socrates was one of the most powerful thinkers in history. He encouraged his students to examine their beliefs. Socrates asked them a series of leading questions to show that people hold many contradictory opinions. This method of teaching by a question-and-answer approach is known as the Socratic method. He devoted his life to gaining self-knowledge and once wrote, “There is only one good, knowledge; and one evil, ignorance.”

Plato
427–347 B.C.
Born into a wealthy Athenian family, Plato had careers as a wrestler and a poet before he became a philosopher. He studied with Socrates. After his teacher died in 399 B.C., Plato left Greece and traveled to North Africa and Italy. He later returned to Athens and founded a school called The Academy in 387 B.C. The school lasted for approximately 900 years. It was Plato who once stated, “Philosophy begins in wonder.”

Aristotle
384–322 B.C.
Aristotle, the son of a physician, was one of the brightest students at Plato’s academy. He came there as a young man and stayed for 20 years until Plato’s death. In 335 B.C., Aristotle opened his own school in Athens called the Lyceum. The school eventually rivaled the Academy. Aristotle once argued, “He who studies how things originated and came into being . . . will achieve the clearest view of them.”

OPINION- Socrates differed from other philosophers of the time in that he believed in absolute standards for truth and justice. Philosophers of the time believed that standards of truth and justice are in the eye of the beholder. What is your opinion?

Flip to see a famous student of Aristotle...
Alexander 356–323 B.C.

When Alexander was only eight or nine years old, he tamed a horse that none of his father's grooms could manage. Alexander had noticed that the horse, Bucephalus, acted wild because he was afraid of his shadow. By speaking to the horse gently and turning him to face the sun, Alexander was able to ride him. Seeing this, Philip told his son, "You'll have to find another kingdom; Macedonia isn't going to be big enough for you."

Alexander took his father's advice. Riding Bucephalus at the head of an army, he conquered a region from Greece to the Indus Valley. When the horse died in what is now Pakistan, Alexander named the city of Bucephala after it. Maybe he was tired of the name Alexandria. He'd already named at least a dozen cities after himself!

Alexander the Great conquered lands half way across the globe. This "mixing" of culture is commonly known today as Hellenistic culture. Hellenistic culture has had an astounding impact on western culture and the world.

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