

Pasargadae

On land | Iran | 546-530 BCE | Grades 6-8

Name _____

Date _____

The man who built the world's biggest empire of his time chose a tomb that looks like a small stone house.

Read the story

Pasargadae was the first capital of the Persian Empire, built by Cyrus the Great around 546 to 530 BCE. Cyrus united the Persians, defeated powerful kingdoms, and created an empire stretching from Turkey to Central Asia.

Cyrus built palaces with tall columns and laid out gardens with water channels. These gardens, divided into four parts, became a model for the famous Persian garden style used for thousands of years, including at the Taj Mahal.

After Cyrus died, he was buried in a stone tomb here. Later, King Darius built a new capital at Persepolis, but Pasargadae stayed special. When Alexander the Great arrived in 330 BCE, he visited Cyrus's tomb and ordered it repaired.

How it ended

Pasargadae lost importance when Persepolis became the main capital. After Alexander's conquest ended the Persian Empire, the city faded. In later centuries, people thought the tomb belonged to King Solomon's mother, which helped protect it.

Key words

- empire: a group of lands and peoples ruled by one ruler or government
- capital: the city where a government is based
- tolerance: accepting people with different beliefs and ways of life

Wow facts

- Cyrus's tomb has stood for about 2,500 years.
- The garden here is one of the oldest known Persian gardens.
- A stone carving at the site shows a figure with four wings, sometimes thought to be Cyrus himself.

Talk about it

1. Why might a powerful king choose a simple tomb?

2. How do gardens show what people value?

Try this

Draw a map of Pasargadae as it looked at its busiest. Label three things people did there.

Quick quiz

Circle the best answer.

1. Who built Pasargadae?

- A. Darius
- B. Cyrus the Great
- C. Xerxes
- D. Alexander

2. What famous style began here?

- A. Persian garden
- B. Gothic cathedral
- C. Roman arch
- D. Japanese temple

3. Which later conqueror visited Cyrus's tomb?

- A. Julius Caesar
- B. Alexander the Great
- C. Genghis Khan
- D. Hannibal

Go further

Open ruinscape.live/pasargadae/ for photos, the Then and Now picture where there is one, and links to museum collections and research. On the globe, Lyra Kael can fly the class there and answer questions.

Answer key (for teachers)

1. B. Cyrus the Great built it as his capital.
2. A. Its four-part garden became the model for Persian gardens.
3. B. Alexander visited the tomb and ordered it repaired.