



## Reading 409

*You are going to read two texts on history from the encyclopaedia Britannica. Read the following statements and decide whether they are TRUE, FALSE or the information is NOT STATED in the text. If the statements are TRUE or FALSE, explain your answer providing proof from the text using YOUR OWN words. Don't quote the text: a copied sequence of 4 words and more is considered a quotation.*

### Text 1

Edward I, also called Edward Longshanks, due to his wars with the Scots and his height, was one of the greatest Plantagenet kings. He was the son of Henry III and king of England in 1272-1307, during a period of rising national consciousness. He strengthened the crown and Parliament against the old feudal nobility. He subdued Wales, destroying its autonomy; and he sought (unsuccessfully) the conquest of Scotland. His reign is particularly noted for administrative efficiency and legal reform. He introduced a series of statutes that did much to strengthen the crown in the feudal hierarchy. His definition and emendation of English common law has earned him the name of the "English Justinian." Edward was crowned at the age of 35. By that time he had redeemed a bad start. He had been arrogant, lawless, violent, treacherous, revengeful, and cruel; his Angevin (dynastic name derived from Anjou) rages matched those of Henry II. Loving his own way and intolerant of opposition, he had still proved susceptible to influence by strong-minded associates. He had shown intense family affection, loyalty to friends, courage, brilliant military capacity, and a gift for leadership; handsome, tall, powerful, and tough, he had the qualities men admired. He loved efficient, strong government, enjoyed power, and had learned to admire justice, though in his own affairs it was often the letter, not the spirit of the law that he observed. Having mastered his anger, he had shown himself capable of patient negotiation, generosity, and even idealism; and he preferred the society and advice of strong counselors with good minds. As long as Burnell (his chancellor) and Queen Eleanor (his wife) lived, the better side of Edward triumphed, and the years until about 1294 were years of great achievement. Thereafter, his character deteriorated for lack of domestic comfort and independent advice. He devoted his failing energies to prosecution of the wars in France and against Scotland.

### Text 2

Aleksander Nevsky was the prince of Novgorod (1236–52) and of Kiev (1246–52) and grand prince of Vladimir (1252–63). He was the son of Yaroslav II Vsevolodovich, grand prince of Vladimir, the foremost among the Russian rulers. In 1236 Alexander was elected prince — a figure who functioned as little more than military commander — of the city of Novgorod. In 1239 he married the daughter of the Prince of Polotsk. Aleksandr Nevsky halted the eastward drive of the Germans

and Swedes. By defeating a Swedish invasion force at the confluence of the Rivers Izhora and Neva (1240), he won the name Nevsky, "of the Neva." After a number of battles against the Teutonic Knights, Alexander decisively defeated the Germans in the famous "massacre on the ice" in April 1242 on a narrow channel between Lakes Chud (Peipus) and Pskov. Alexander also won many victories over the pagan Lithuanians and the Finnic peoples. Alexander is believed to have helped the imposition of the Mongol yoke on northern Russia. But because of that he proceeded to restore Russia by building fortifications and churches and promulgating laws. Because Alexander was a willing collaborator, he may have reduced the common people's suffering by interceding for them with the Khan. He was supported by the church. For all these reasons, Alexander by 1381 was elevated to the status of a local saint and was canonized. As grand prince, he continued to rule Novgorod through his son Vasily, thus changing the constitutional basis of rule in Novgorod from personal sovereignty by invitation to institutional sovereignty by the principal Russian ruler. When, in 1255, Novgorod, tiring of grand princely rule, expelled Vasily and invited an opponent of Mongol hegemony, Alexander assembled an army and reinstalled his son. Alexander's son Daniel founded the house of Moscow, which subsequently reunited the northern Russian lands and ruled until 1598.

1. Both leaders were chosen to rule their countries by the people.
2. Neither leader was a great warrior.
3. Both leaders were married.
4. One of them had to work hard at his character.
5. Neither of them enjoyed the responsibility for their countries.
6. Only one of the leaders was a great negotiator.
7. One of the leaders changed the way his country was governed.
8. Both leaders contributed to the development of the legislation in their countries.

# Keys

1. Both leaders were chosen to rule their countries by the people. **False**
2. Neither leader was a great warrior. **False**
3. Both leaders were married. **True**
4. One of them had to work hard at his character. **True**
5. Neither of them enjoyed the responsibility for their countries. **Not stated**
6. Only one of the leaders was a great negotiator. **False**
7. One of the leaders changed the way his country was governed. **True**
8. Both leaders contributed to the development of the legislation in their countries. **True**