



>> Napoleon was a military genius who dominated Europe for more than a decade.

Interactive Flipped Video

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From 1799 to 1815, Napoleon Bonaparte dominated France and Europe. A hero to some, an evil force to others, he gave his name to the final phase of the French Revolution—the Age of Napoleon.

>> Objectives

Describe how Napoleon Bonaparte rose to power.

Explain the impact of Napoleon and the Napoleonic Wars.

Identify the reasons for Napoleon's fall from power.

Understand how the Congress of Vienna tried to restore order to Europe.

>> Key Terms

- plebiscite
- Napoleonic Code
- Napoleonic Wars
- annex
- Continental System
- guerrilla warfare
- abdicate
- Congress of Vienna
- legitimacy
- Concert of Europe

The Age of Napoleon

Napoleon on the Rise

Early Years Napoleon was born in Corsica, a French-ruled island in the Mediterranean. At age nine, he was sent to France to be trained for a military career. When the revolution broke out, he was an ambitious 20-year-old lieutenant, eager to make a name for himself.

Napoleon favored the Jacobins and republican rule. However, he found the conflicting ideas and personalities of the French Revolution confusing. He wrote to his brother in 1793: "Since one must take sides, one might as well choose the side that is victorious, the side which devastates, loots, and burns. Considering the alternative, it is better to eat than be eaten."

Military Success During the turmoil of the Revolution, Napoleon rose quickly in the army. In December 1793, he drove British forces out of the French port of Toulon (too LOHN).

He then went on to win several dazzling victories against the Austrians, capturing most of northern Italy and forcing the Hapsburg emperor to make peace. Hoping to disrupt British trade with India, he led an expedition to Egypt in 1798. The Egyptian campaign proved to be a disaster, but Napoleon managed to hide stories of the worst losses from his admirers in France.

Success fueled Napoleon's ambition. By 1799, he moved from victorious general to political leader. That year, he helped overthrow the weak Directory and set up a three-man governing board known as the Consulate. Another constitution was drawn up, but Napoleon soon took the title First Consul. In 1800, he forced Spain to return Louisiana Territory to France. In 1802, Napoleon had himself named consul for life.

Napoleon Crowns Himself Emperor Two years later, Napoleon had acquired enough power to assume the title Emperor of the French. He invited the pope to preside over his coronation in Paris. During the ceremony, however, Napoleon took the crown from the pope's hands and placed it on his own head. By this action, Napoleon meant to show that he owed his throne to no one but himself.

At each step on his rise to power, Napoleon had held a **plebiscite** (PLEB uh syt), or popular vote by ballot. Each time, the French strongly supported him, even after he had assumed absolute power as emperor. To understand why, we must look at his policies.

? CITE EVIDENCE How did Napoleon rise to power so quickly in France?

Napoleon Reforms France

Napoleon consolidated his power by strengthening the central government. Order, security, and efficiency replaced liberty, equality, and fraternity as the slogans of the new regime.

Social and Economic Reforms To restore economic prosperity, Napoleon controlled prices, encouraged new industry, and built roads and canals. He set up a system of public schools under strict government control to ensure well-trained officials and military officers.

At the same time, Napoleon backed off from some of the Revolution's social reforms. He made peace with the Catholic Church in the Concordat of 1801. The Concordat kept the Church under state control but recognized religious freedom for Catholics. Revolutionaries who opposed the Church denounced the agreement, but Catholics welcomed it.

Napoleon won support across class lines. He encouraged émigrés to return, provided they take an oath of loyalty. Peasants were relieved when he recognized their right to lands they had bought from the Church and nobles during the Revolution.

The middle class, who had benefited most from the Revolution, approved of Napoleon's economic reforms and the restoration of order after years of chaos.

Napoleon also opened jobs to all, based on talent, a popular policy among those who remembered the old aristocratic monopoly of power.

The Napoleonic Code Among Napoleon's most lasting reforms was a new code of laws, popularly called the **Napoleonic Code**. It embodied Enlightenment principles such as the equality of all citizens before the law, religious toleration, and the abolition of feudalism.

At the same time, the Napoleonic Code undid some reforms of the French Revolution. Women, for example, lost most of their newly gained rights and could not exercise the rights of citizenship. Male heads of households regained complete authority over their wives and children. Again, Napoleon valued order and authority over individual rights.

? DESCRIBE What were some of the reforms Napoleon introduced?

The Napoleonic Wars

From 1804 to 1812, Napoleon furthered his reputation on the battlefield. In a series of conflicts known as the **Napoleonic Wars**, he battled the combined forces of the greatest European powers. He took great risks



>> At Napoleon's coronation, he placed the crown on his own head to show that he was the source of his own power, not the pope.

and even suffered huge losses. "I grew up on the field of battle," he once said, "and a man such as I am cares little for the life of a million men." By 1812, his Grand Empire reached its greatest extent.

As a military leader, Napoleon valued rapid movements and made effective use of his large armies. He developed a new plan for each battle so opposing generals could never anticipate what he would do next. His enemies paid tribute to his leadership. Napoleon's presence on the battlefield, said one, was "worth 40,000 troops."

Redrawing the Map of Europe As Napoleon created a vast French empire, he redrew the map of Europe. He **annexed**, or incorporated, into his empire the Netherlands, Belgium, and parts of Italy and Germany.

He also abolished the tottering Holy Roman Empire and created a 38 member Confederation of the Rhine under French protection. He cut Prussian territory in half, turning part of old Poland into the Grand Duchy of Warsaw.

Napoleon controlled much of Europe through forceful diplomacy. One tactic was placing friends and relatives on the thrones of Europe. For example, after unseating the king of Spain, he placed his own brother, Joseph Bonaparte, on the throne. He also forced alliances on European powers from Madrid to Moscow. At various

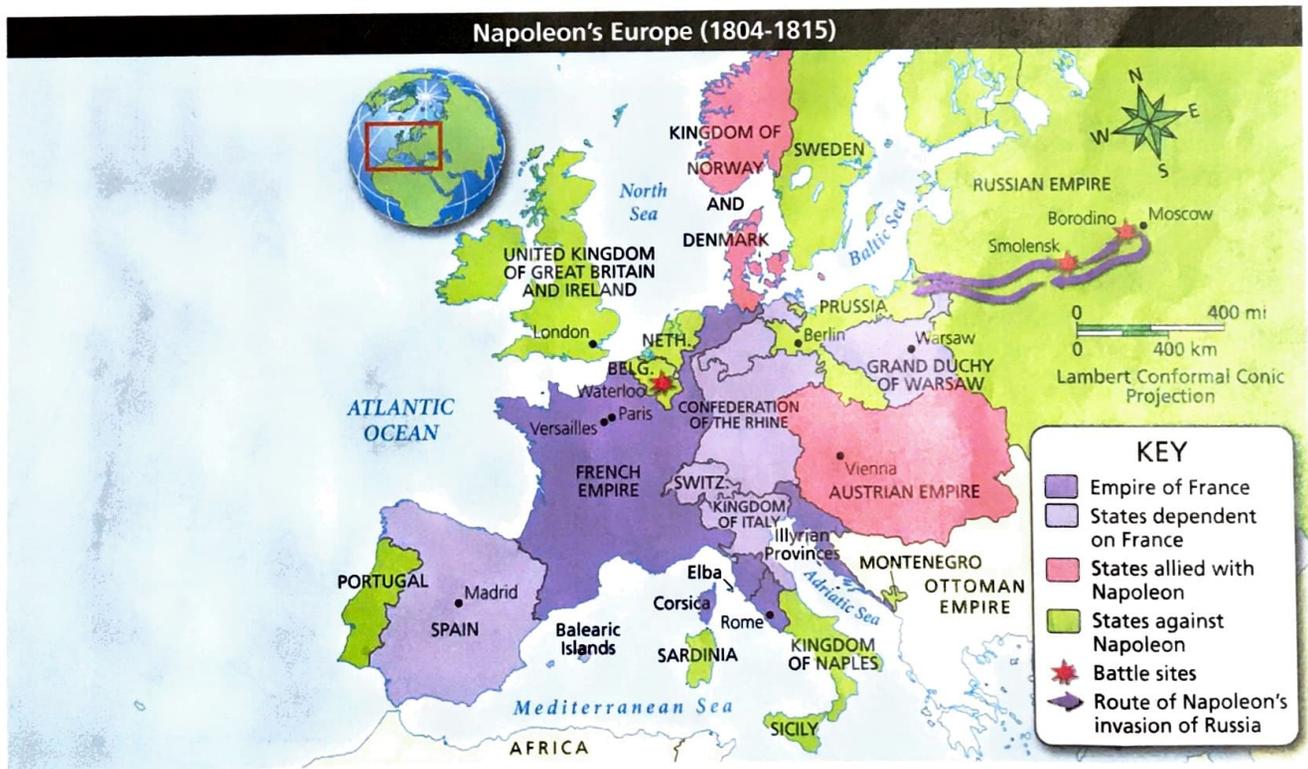
times, the rulers of Austria, Prussia, and Russia reluctantly signed treaties with the "Corsican ogre," as defeated monarchs called him.

In France, Napoleon's successes boosted the spirit of nationalism. Great victory parades filled the streets of Paris with cheering crowds. The people celebrated the glory and grandeur that Napoleon had gained for France.

The Continental System Of all the major European powers, Britain alone remained outside Napoleon's European empire. With only a small army, Britain relied on its sea power to stop Napoleon's drive to rule the continent. In 1805, Napoleon prepared to invade England. But at the Battle of Trafalgar, fought off the southwest coast of Spain, British Admiral Horatio Nelson smashed the French fleet.

With an invasion ruled out, Napoleon struck at Britain's lifeblood, its commerce. He waged economic warfare through the **Continental System**, which closed European ports to British goods. Britain responded with its own blockade of European ports. A blockade involves shutting off ports to keep people or supplies from moving in or out.

During their long struggle, both Britain and France seized neutral ships suspected of trading with the other side. British attacks on American ships sparked



>> Analyze Maps Napoleon reshaped the map of Europe with his military and political conquests. Who were Napoleon's allies?

Interactive Map

anger in the United States and eventually triggered the War of 1812.

In the end, Napoleon's Continental System failed to bring Britain to its knees. Although British exports declined, Britain's powerful navy kept vital trade routes open to the Americas and India. Meanwhile, trade restrictions created a scarcity of goods in Europe, sent prices soaring, and intensified resentment against French power.

Impact of Napoleon's Conquests French armies under Napoleon spread ideas of the revolution across Europe. They backed liberal reforms in the lands they conquered. In some places, they helped install revolutionary governments that abolished titles of nobility, ended Church privileges, opened careers to men of talent, and ended serfdom and manorial dues. The Napoleonic Code, too, influenced countries in continental Europe and Latin America.

? IDENTIFY CAUSE AND EFFECT How did Napoleon come to dominate most of Europe by 1812?

Challenges to the French Empire

In 1812, Napoleon continued his pursuit of European domination and invaded Russia. This campaign began a chain of events that eventually led to his downfall. Napoleon's final defeat brought an end to the era of the French Revolution.

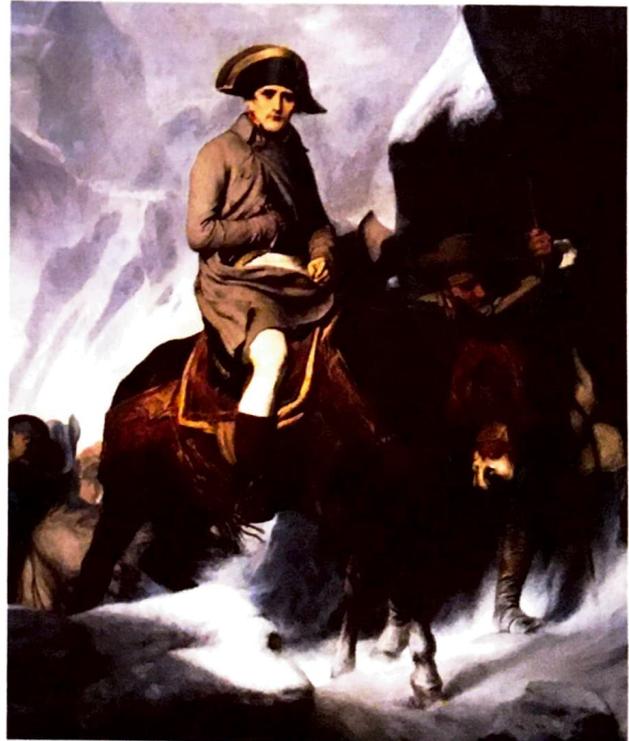
Seeds of Defeat Napoleon's successes contained seeds of defeat. Although nationalism spurred French armies to success, it worked against them, too. Many Europeans who had welcomed the ideas of the French Revolution nevertheless saw Napoleon and his armies as foreign oppressors. They resented the Continental System and Napoleon's effort to impose French culture on them.

From Rome to Madrid to the Netherlands, nationalism unleashed revolts against France. In the German states, leaders encouraged national loyalty among German-speaking people to counter French influence.

Resistance in Spain Resistance to foreign rule bled French-occupying forces dry in Spain. Napoleon introduced reforms that sought to undermine the Spanish Catholic Church. But many Spaniards remained loyal to their former king and devoted to the Church. When the Spanish resisted the invaders, well-armed French forces responded with brutal repression.



>> This painting depicts the Battle of Trafalgar, in which the British navy defeated the French on October 21, 1805.



>> Napoleon, shown here crossing the Alps on horseback, attempted to spread French culture across Europe.

 **Interactive Timeline**



>> Spanish patriots bravely resisted French invaders. In his famous painting *Third of May 1808*, Spanish artist Francisco Goya shows the execution of Spanish resistance leaders by French troops.



>> The French invasion of Russia became a disaster when the lack of food and supplies combined with a hard winter to nearly destroy Napoleon's army.

Far from crushing resistance, however, the French response further inflamed Spanish nationalism. Efforts to drive out the French intensified.

Spanish patriots conducted a campaign of **guerrilla warfare**, or hit-and-run raids, against the French. (In Spanish, guerrilla means “little war.”) Small bands of guerrillas ambushed French supply trains or troops before retreating into the countryside. These attacks kept large numbers of French soldiers tied down in Spain when Napoleon needed them elsewhere.

Austria Seeks Revenge Spanish resistance encouraged Austria to resume hostilities against the French. In 1805, at the Battle of Austerlitz, Napoleon had won a crushing victory against an Austro-Russian army of superior numbers. Now, in 1809, the Austrians sought revenge. But once again, Napoleon triumphed—this time at the Battle of Wagram. By the peace agreement that followed, Austria surrendered lands populated by more than three million subjects.

Napoleon Invades Russia Tsar Alexander I of Russia was once an ally of Napoleon. The tsar and Napoleon planned to divide Europe if Alexander helped Napoleon in his Continental System. Many countries objected to this system, and Russia became unhappy with the economic effects of the system as well. Yet another cause for concern was that Napoleon had enlarged the Grand Duchy of Warsaw that bordered Russia on the west.

These and other issues led the tsar to withdraw his support from the Continental System. Napoleon responded to the tsar's action by assembling an army with soldiers from 20 nations, known as the Grand Army.

In 1812, with about 600,000 soldiers and 50,000 horses, Napoleon invaded Russia. To avoid battles with Napoleon, the Russians retreated eastward, burning crops and villages as they went. This scorched-earth policy left the French hungry and cold as winter came.

Napoleon entered Moscow in September. His triumph, however, was short-lived.

The Retreat from Moscow Even as French troops entered Moscow, Napoleon realized that he would not be able to feed and supply his army through the long Russian winter. In October, he turned homeward.

The 1,000-mile retreat from Moscow turned into a desperate battle for survival. Russian attacks and the brutal Russian winter took a terrible toll. Fewer than 20,000 soldiers of the once-proud Grand Army survived. Many died. Others deserted. French general Michel Ney sadly concluded, “General Famine and General

Winter, rather than Russian bullets, have conquered the Grand Army."

Napoleon rushed to Paris to raise a new force to defend France. His reputation for success had been shattered.

? ANALYZE INFORMATION What led to Napoleon's disaster in Russia?

Napoleon Falls from Power

The disaster in Russia changed the course of the Napoleonic Wars. Russia, Britain, Austria, and Prussia formed a new alliance against a weakened France. In 1813, they defeated Napoleon in the Battle of the Nations at Leipzig.

Napoleon Abdicates Briefly The next year, Napoleon **abdicated**, or stepped down from power. The victors exiled him to Elba, an island in the Mediterranean. They then recognized Louis XVIII, brother of Louis XVI, as king of France.

The restoration of Louis XVIII did not go smoothly. He agreed to accept the Napoleonic Code and honor the land settlements made during the Revolution. However, many émigrés rushed back to France bent on revenge. An economic depression and the fear of a return to the old regime helped rekindle loyalty to Napoleon.

As the victorious allies gathered in Vienna for a general peace conference, Napoleon escaped his island exile and returned to France. Soldiers flocked to his banner. As citizens cheered Napoleon's advance, Louis XVIII fled. In March 1815, Napoleon entered Paris in triumph.

Napoleon Is Defeated at Waterloo Napoleon's triumph was short-lived. His star soared for only 100 days, while the allies reassembled their forces. On June 18, 1815, the opposing armies met near the town of Waterloo in Belgium. British forces under the Duke of Wellington and a Prussian army commanded by General Blücher crushed the French in an agonizing day-long battle. Once again, Napoleon was forced to abdicate and to go into exile on St. Helena, a lonely island in the South Atlantic. This time, he would not return.

Napoleon's Legacy Napoleon died in 1821, but his legend lived on in France and around the world. His contemporaries as well as historians today have long debated his legacy. Was he "the Revolution on horseback," as he claimed? Or was he a traitor to the Revolution?



>> Once the scourge of Europe, Napoleon eventually fell from power. This painting shows Napoleon in exile.

No one, however, questions Napoleon's impact on France and on Europe. The Napoleonic Code consolidated many changes of the Revolution. The France of Napoleon was a centralized state with a constitution. Elections were held with expanded, though limited, suffrage. Many more citizens had rights to property and access to education than under the old regime. Still, French citizens lost many rights promised so fervently by republicans during the Convention.

On the world stage, the Napoleonic Wars spread the ideas of the French Revolution. He failed to make Europe into a French empire. Instead, he sparked nationalist feelings across Europe. The abolition of the Holy Roman Empire would eventually help in creating a new Germany.

Napoleon's impact also reached across the Atlantic. In 1803, his decision to sell France's vast Louisiana Territory to the American government doubled the size of the United States and ushered in an age of American expansion.

? ANALYZE INFORMATION Why were the French so eager for Napoleon to return to France after his escape from Elba?

The Congress of Vienna

After Waterloo, diplomats and heads of state again sat down at the **Congress of Vienna**. They faced the monumental task of restoring stability and order in Europe after years of war.

The Congress met for 10 months, from September 1814 to June 1815. It was a brilliant gathering of European leaders. Diplomats and royalty dined and danced, attended concerts and ballets, and enjoyed parties arranged by their host, Emperor Francis I of Austria. The work fell to Prince Clemens von Metternich of Austria, Tsar Alexander I of Russia, and Lord Robert Castlereagh of Britain. Defeated France was represented by Prince Charles Maurice de Talleyrand.

Goals of the Congress The chief goal of the Vienna decision makers was to create a lasting peace by establishing a balance of power and protecting the system of monarchy. Each of the leaders also pursued his own goals. Metternich, the dominant figure at the Congress, wanted to restore things to the way they were in 1792. Alexander I urged a “holy alliance” of Christian monarchs to suppress future revolutions.

Lord Castlereagh was determined to prevent a revival of French military power. The aged diplomat Talleyrand shrewdly played the other leaders against one another so France would be accepted as an equal partner.

Restoring Peace and Order The peacemakers redrew the map of Europe. To contain French ambitions, they ringed France with strong countries. In the north, they added Belgium and Luxembourg to Holland to create the kingdom of the Netherlands. To prevent French expansion eastward, they gave Prussia lands along the Rhine River. They also allowed Austria to reassert control over northern Italy.

To turn back the clock to 1792, the architects of the peace promoted the principle of **legitimacy**, restoring hereditary monarchies that the French Revolution or Napoleon had unseated. Even before the Congress began, they had put Louis XVIII on the French throne. Later, they restored “legitimate” monarchs in Portugal, Spain, and the Italian states.

Successes and Failures To protect the new order, Austria, Russia, Prussia, and Great Britain extended their wartime alliance. In the Quadruple Alliance, the four nations pledged to act together to balance power and suppress uprisings. They then set up the **Concert of Europe**, a loose organization whose goal was to preserve the agreements set up by the Congress of Vienna. The four great powers—and later France—worked to suppress any uprising inspired by the French Revolution. The Concert of Europe was the first modern international peace keeping organization.



>> Analyze Maps Why did the Congress of Vienna enlarge some of the countries around France?

The Vienna statesmen achieved their immediate goals in creating a lasting peace. Peace lasted in Europe for the next 100 years. Although smaller wars broke out, Europe would not see war on a Napoleonic scale until 1914. They failed, however, to foresee how powerful new forces such as nationalism would shake the foundations of Europe and Latin America in the future.

? ANALYZE INFORMATION What was the chief goal of the Congress of Vienna?

ASSESSMENT

1. **Identify** What political views did Napoleon spread in Europe that angered monarchs?

2. **Describe** In what way was the Continental System an act of economic warfare? Why did it fail?

3. **Describe** In what way did Napoleon's actions doom his dream of creating a French empire in Europe?

4. **Compare and Contrast** Compare and contrast the goals of Prince Clemens von Metternich of Austria and Britain's Lord Castlereagh during the Congress of Vienna.

5. **Draw Conclusions** Why might some of the French have resisted a return to a monarchy?