

ACTIVITY SIX: NAPOLEON

TEACHER DEBRIEFING SHEET

Discussion Questions:

1. To what extent were the goals of the French Revolution met during the rule of Napoleon?
2. Describe the social, political, economic, and religious changes Napoleon brought to France and the French Empire.
3. How were different groups of people (peasants, workers, the middle class, the nobility, men, women, etc.) affected, both positively and negatively, by Napoleon's rule?
4. To what extent was Napoleon a hero of democracy? To what extent was he an enemy of democracy? Justify your answers with specific evidence.
5. What is democracy after all?

Task:

Put Napoleon on trial for destroying democracy. Your trial must include opening and closing statements for both the prosecution (those trying to prove that Napoleon is guilty of destroying democracy) and the defense (those trying to prove that Napoleon is innocent of destroying democracy). Your trial must also include statements from witnesses representing both the prosecution and the defense and must deliver a verdict (decision stating whether Napoleon is guilty or innocent).

Task Evaluation Criteria:



- Napoleon is put on trial for destroying democracy. Trial must include opening and closing statements for both the prosecution and the defense. Trial must also include statements from at least three witnesses (including at least one each representing the prosecution and the defense) and must deliver a verdict.
- Trial must include at least five pieces of specific historical information (people, places, events, statistics, etc.).
- Trial must make use of three or more of the following: costumes, props, audience participation, emotion, gestures, and/or voice.
- Witnesses must represent at least three different perspectives from the time of Napoleon (Napoleon himself, French citizens, citizens of the territories of the French Empire, members of the nobility, members of the clergy, the middle class, workers, peasants, men, women, etc.).
- Trial addresses the question, "What is democracy, after all?"

Extension Questions:

1. What do you think was the single-most important contribution Napoleon made to democracy? Why?
2. Compare and contrast democracy under Napoleon with democracy in the early United States.
3. Was Napoleon a hero of democracy or an enemy of democracy? Justify your answer.
4. Describe what you think happened to the French economy as a result of Napoleon's reforms.
5. How do you think Napoleon's rule affected people living in European colonies on other continents?
6. Why was Napoleon so controversial?
7. Describe the pros and cons of having a unified system of laws, like that set up under the Code Napoleon.
8. If you were a member of the French nobility (or the middle class, or a worker, or a peasant, etc.) would you have supported Napoleon? Why or why not?
9. Compare and contrast the role education played in Napoleon's democracy with the role education plays in our democracy in the United States today.
10. What did the territories conquered by Napoleon gain as a result of their becoming part of the French Empire? What did they give up?

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ACTIVITY CARD

-  Read the CONTEXT-SETTING CARD. Then use the information on your RESOURCE CARDS to talk about the DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.
-  Examine the TASK and complete the project to meet all of the TASK EVALUATION CRITERIA.

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CONTEXT-SETTING CARD

Napoleon Bonaparte ruled France from 1799-1815. A popular military general, Napoleon came to power in a coup d'état (overthrow of the government). Ten years before Napoleon came to power, the French people had risen up against the rule of King Louis XVI in what came to be known as the French Revolution. During the French Revolution, the social, political, and economic makeup of French society changed dramatically with the introduction of democratic ideals. When Napoleon seized power, it remained to be seen whether or not he would uphold the democratic ideals of the French Revolution.



The democratic ideals of equality, more say in government, and individual rights were at the heart of the French Revolution that began in 1789. During the French Revolution, members of the social class known as the “Third Estate” (members of the middle and lower classes, including: peasants, workers, artisans, merchants, and professionals) revolted against the powerful, ruling elite. During the French Revolution, many social, political, and economic changes occurred. The feudal system (which had granted power and privilege to the nobility) was abolished (ended), the monarchy (rule by a king and/or a queen) came to an end, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen granted individual rights to all French citizens, and the power of the Catholic Church was limited. By 1795, the democratic advances of the Revolution had slowed, and power was in the hands of a group of five men, known as “The Directory.” The Directory was considered weak and corrupt; among other actions, the Directory canceled elections whose results they did not like and turned to the military to maintain order. The people of France did not have much faith in the rule of the Directory, which enabled Napoleon and his followers to seize control of France in November of 1799.

Napoleon Bonaparte gained a strong following within the French army by making statements such as this one, as he addressed French troops at the battle front against Italy in Nice, France, 1796:

Soldiers! You are hungry and badly clothed. The government owes you money, but can give you nothing. With me you will find honor, glory, and riches.

After coming to power in 1799, Napoleon was named First Consul and was to rule France for a period of ten years. However, in 1802, when Napoleon’s popularity increased dramatically after he signed treaties bringing peace to France, his term of rule was extended for life. Soon thereafter, Napoleon began what was to be more than a decade-long attempt to expand the French Empire by fighting wars to gain control over additional territories in Europe. In 1804, Napoleon declared himself Emperor of France.

Napoleon’s rule created much controversy. While some saw Napoleon as a great leader and a supporter of democracy, others saw him as a tyrant and an enemy of democracy.



What is Democracy After All?

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1799
Napoleon Seizes Power

Napoleon Bonaparte and his followers overthrew the government of the Directory. Three consuls, or leaders – Napoleon, Emmanuel Sieyès and Roger Ducos – were to share power. However, Napoleon was named First Consul of France and became the official ruler of France. The new constitution stated that Napoleon was to serve in that position for a period of ten years.

1804
Napoleon Becomes Emperor of France

In an elaborate ceremony in Paris, Napoleon was crowned Emperor of France. Although the Pope was present, Napoleon took the crown and put it on his own head, signaling that he did not see the Pope as a higher authority. At right, detail from Jacques-Louis David's 1807 painting *Consecration of the Emperor Napoleon I and Coronation of the Empress Josephine in the Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris on 2 December 1804*.



1799

1815

1802
Napoleon Becomes Ruler for Life

Napoleon was made First Consul for life and was granted the right to choose his successor (the person who would lead after his death).

1814
Napoleon Abdicates

In April, France was defeated by a coalition of enemy countries and Napoleon was forced to abdicate (give up his position as leader). Napoleon was exiled to the island of Elba and Louis XVIII (brother of the last king, Louis XVI) was named King of France. The return of a monarch led many to fear that French society would return to the way it was before the French Revolution.

1815
The Hundred Days

Napoleon returned to power in March. Again, a coalition of countries fought to defeat Napoleon. Defeated at the Battle of Waterloo, Napoleon surrendered on July 15th. Napoleon was once again exiled, this time to the island of St. Helena, and Louis XVIII returned to the throne. Napoleon died of cancer in 1821.

Timeline: The Rise and Fall of Napoleon Bonaparte

RESOURCE CARD 1 (OF 4)

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RESOURCE CARD 2 (OF 4) Democratic Reforms

During the French Revolution, the overall goal for those rebelling was to make France more democratic. Those who rebelled against the monarchy hoped that individual rights would be secured for all people, that the government would represent the people (rather than its own interests, as had been the case under the monarchy), that a fair system of taxation would be established (set up), and that economic opportunity would be extended to all French citizens. During the period 1789-1799, many reforms (changes) were put in place that began to bring about greater equality and made France more democratic. Napoleon continued and built upon many of these democratic reforms, as can be seen in the table below.

Category	Democratic Reforms Under Napoleon
Law & Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Corrupt government officials were fired● Government officials were appointed by merit (ability) rather than because of their position in society● A system of laws known as the Code Napoleon (also called the Napoleonic Code) was put in place. The Code Napoleon unified laws throughout France and protected many of the rights granted during the French Revolution, such as freedom of religion, equality before the law, and the protection of private property● The government was reorganized under a prefect system, under which one prefect was appointed to govern each of France's 83 departments (regions)
Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Tariffs (taxes on imports) were put in place to protect French industries from foreign competition● A national bank – the Bank of France -- was established● Loans were made available to small businesses● Existing bridges, roads, and canals were repaired, and new ones were built● The tax code was reformed, creating a fair system of taxation● Food was made available at low prices
Religion	<p>Napoleon negotiated with the Pope, resulting in the Concordat of 1801. This agreement included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Catholicism was defined as the favored religion of France (not the official religion, as it had been previously), thereby allowing greater religious freedom in France● Land seized (taken) from the Catholic Church during the French Revolution would not be returned to the Catholic Church● The Catholic Church no longer had the right to collect the tithe (donations required of church members)
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● A state system of education – open to people from all socioeconomic classes – was created, and obedience, military values, science, and math were given greater importance

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RESOURCE CARD 3 (OF 4) The Spread of Democracy Under Napoleon

The democratic reforms that were put in place by Napoleon affected people from many socioeconomic classes and were spread throughout Europe as Napoleon's empire expanded (grew).

Workers & Peasants

- Expansion of trade resulted in the creation of new jobs
- Food was made available at low prices
- Peasants were able to keep the land they had gained during the French Revolution

The Middle Class

- Tariffs (taxes on imports) helped to protect French businesses from foreign competition
- A new national bank granted credit to businesses
- Napoleon promised the middle class jobs in the army and in the government (before Napoleon, these jobs were usually reserved for members of the nobility)

The Nobility

- Nobles who had fled (left) France during the Revolution were granted pardons (were forgiven and allowed to return and rejoin French society)
- Many nobles were given important jobs in government

As Napoleon's empire spread, so did democratic institutions (practices or organizations that are established within a society). These democratic institutions included:

- The Napoleonic Code (French system of laws)
- Reduced privileges for the nobility and the clergy
- Religious tolerance
- Improved systems of public education
- Fairer taxation
- Hiring qualified government officials



As the French Empire spread, so did an end to privilege. With the end of privilege came greater equality, including equality of economic opportunity. Governments were reorganized according to democratic principles; constitutions, bills of rights, and legislatures were promised. The idea of universal male suffrage (the right to vote for all men) meant that more people were represented by their governments.

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RESOURCE CARD 4 (OF 4) Criticism of Napoleon

While Napoleon encouraged the growth of democracy in many ways, he also limited many of the individual freedoms that had been ideals of the French Revolution. Napoleon did not support freedom of speech; he did not want anyone speaking out against him. Therefore, the written word (newspapers, books, etc.) was censored (examined with the goal of banning or deleting anything not favorable to the government) by the government. In addition to censoring the press and other written works, Napoleon had the head of the Ministry of Police, Joseph Fouché, set up a network of spies throughout France. These spies reported to Fouché, and Fouché gave Napoleon a daily report on their findings. Napoleon also did not believe that women should be granted the same rights as men. The Code Napoleon specified that women could not vote, and many of the laws in the Code gave men an advantage over women. While a man could be granted a divorce if he could prove his wife had cheated, a woman would not be granted a divorce unless her husband had lived with his mistress for two years. Men could legally kill their wives for having affairs, while women could be tried for murder if they killed their cheating husbands.

At first, many people in the lands Napoleon added to his empire welcomed him as a liberator, excited at the promise of democratic change. However, Napoleon demanded that the people in these lands pay taxes to France and provide France with soldiers and with raw materials to help develop French industries.



“The Tyrant Unmasked” This French political cartoon criticized Napoleon's deception and his tyranny. France is shown removing the Emperor's human mask: a tiger's face appears underneath.

In Napoleon's own words:

- *In a great nation, the majority are incapable of judging wisely of things.*
- *Women are thought of too highly, they should not be regarded as equal to men. In reality, they are nothing more than machines for producing children. Society would become upset if women were allowed independence. To depend on men is their rightful position.*
- *Four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets.*
- *It is said that I love power. Well, has anyone any reason to complain? Never have the prisons been so empty; the roads have never been safer. The government is strong, my hand is steady and the officials do their jobs properly. All citizens and all their properties are well-protected. I have governed for the people and in their interests.*

This obituary for Napoleon appeared in a British newspaper, *The London Times*, on July 5, 1821:

He got rid of liberty in France. His subjects loved him because of his military glory. He produced more trouble and misery for his fellow human beings than anyone else of this age. His wars against foreign states were carried out to take the minds of his subjects off their slavery at home.

What is Democracy After All?

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INDIVIDUAL REPORT

Imagine that you are a citizen of the French Empire during the rule of Napoleon. Write a thank you note to Napoleon in which you show your appreciation for the five most important things he has done for you. In your note, you must also express concern about at least three of Napoleon's policies that do not serve you well.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Response is written in the form of a thank you note and from the point of view of a citizen of the French Empire during Napoleon's rule; response includes an explanation of who "you" (a citizen of the French Empire) are – this should include information about your gender, job, family, where you live, and your social class.
- Response explains – using specific historical information – the five most important things Napoleon has done for you.
- Response expresses concern – using specific historical information – about at least three of Napoleon's policies that do not serve you well.
- Response addresses the question: "What is democracy after all?"