

Outline: The Napoleonic Era, 1799–1815

I. Napoleon's background

- a. Born in Corsica in 1769
- b. Military education
- c. Favored Jacobins and republicanism
- d. Military hero
 - i. Drove British forces from port of Toulon in 1793
 - ii. Captured northern Italy and forced Austrian Hapsburgs to make peace
 - iii. 1798 – Egyptian expedition

II. Napoleonic campaign in Egypt, 1798-1801

- a. Napoleon's attempt to seize Egypt and undermine Britain's access to India
 - i. Napoleon took control of Egypt on land
 - ii. Brought along scientists
 1. Studied the pyramids, etc.
 2. Discovered the Rosetta stone
 3. British took control of Egypt and all discoveries following the defeat of the French forces in Egypt
 4. Milestone in the development of modern archaeology
- b. Battle of the Nile – August 1-3, 1798
 - i. Britain's Horatio Nelson defeated French naval forces
 - ii. Napoleon and his troops became stranded in Egypt
 - iii. August, 1799 – Napoleon snuck past the British blockade in the Mediterranean and returned to Paris

III. Napoleon's rise to power

- a. 1799
 - i. Snuck past British blockade in Mediterranean
 - ii. Took control of the Directory by *coup d'état*
 - iii. Set up three-man Consulate
 1. With himself as First Consul
- b. 1802
 - i. Consul for life
- c. 1804
 - i. Crowned himself emperor
- d. Plebiscite
 - i. Popular vote done by ballot
 - ii. Napoleon always held plebiscites
 - iii. Everyone always voted for his policies
- e. Democratic despotism
 - i. He had absolute power regardless of the fact that he held plebiscites

IV. Napoleon's reforms

- a. Class system

- i. Emigres could return if they swore loyalty to the new French government
 - ii. Peasants kept lands they'd bought from Church and nobles
 - iii. New nobility established through a meritocracy (e.g., Legion of Honor)
- b. Economy
 - i. Controlled prices
 - ii. Encouraged industrial growth
 - iii. Strengthened the nation's infrastructure
- c. Education
 - i. Nationally-controlled public schools
- d. Government
 - i. Strengthened the national government
 - ii. Ran an efficient bureaucracy
- e. Laws – Napoleonic Code
 - i. Equality before the law
 - ii. Religious tolerance
 - iii. End to feudalism
 - iv. But women lost many of their rights
- f. Religion – Concordat of 1801
 - i. Church under government control
 - ii. Religious freedom

V. Napoleon's empire

- a. 1804-1802 – Military successes due to leadership skills, large armies, and surprise tactics
- b. Annexed parts of Germany and Italy as well as Belgium and the Netherlands
- c. Replaced Holy Roman Empire with French-controlled Federation of the Rhine
- d. Cut off half of Prussia to form Grand Duchy of Warsaw (historical Poland)
- e. Placed puppet rulers on conquered thrones (e.g., Joseph Bonaparte as king of Spain)
- f. Formed alliances
 - i. Including divorcing Josephine de Beauharnais to marry Marie Louise of Austria
- g. Nationalism grew with Napoleon's successes
 - i. Both in France and in the areas he conquered

VI. Empress Josephine

- a. Napoleon's first wife
- b. Aided her husband's career through her interpersonal skills and political connections
- c. "I win battles, but Josephine wins hearts" – Napoleon
- d. After he became emperor, Napoleon divorced her to marry Marie-Louise, an Austrian princess

VII. British opposition to Napoleon

- a. 1805
 - i. France tried to invade Great Britain
 - ii. Admiral Horatio Nelson defeated him at the Battle of Trafalgar
 - 1. Nelson was killed in this naval battle
- b. Napoleon struck back with the Continental System
 - i. No trade between the European continent and Great Britain
- c. Great Britain responded with blockades
 - i. British attacks on American ships still trading with France helped spark the War of 1812 with the U.S.
- d. Continental system failed because European countries wanted and needed trade

VIII. Review questions

- a. What were the results of France's Egyptian Campaign?

- b. How did Napoleon come to power in France?
- c. Describe Napoleon's reforms.
- d. Why did nationalism spread throughout Europe during the Napoleonic era?
- e. Who was Nelson and what role did he play in the eventual defeat of Napoleon?

IX. Napoleon spreads revolution

- a. Napoleon spread revolution with his *Grand Armée*
- b. Supported liberal reforms in conquered lands
- c. Abolished nobility and feudalism
- d. Set up meritocracies
- e. Ended Church privileges
- f. Napoleonic Code spread even to areas beyond the French empire
 - i. Such as the Spanish and Portuguese colonies in Latin America

X. Decline of Napoleon's empire

- a. Europeans hated the Continental System
- b. Revolutionary ideals of self-government spurred nationalism in conquered states
- c. Peninsular War in Spain and Portugal
 - i. People of Iberian Peninsula pledged loyalty to Church and king
 - 1. Aided by the British
 - ii. Local rulers formed juntas to maintain power
 - 1. Did not actually want to give up all of their power to a returning Spanish or Portuguese king
 - 2. Wanted to keep many elements of republicanism
- d. War with Austria
 - i. 1805 – Battle of Austerlitz – French won
 - ii. 1809 – Battle of Wagram – French won
 - iii. But the Austrian opposition illustrated the commitment to end French domination in Europe

XI. Napoleon's invasion of Russia

- a. Tsar Alexander I withdrew from the French alliance because of the unpopularity of the Continental System and Grand Duchy of Warsaw ↘
- b. Napoleon assembled the *Grand Armée* from 20 nations (almost 600,000 soldiers) to invade Russia in 1812 ↘
- c. Russians abandoned Moscow and used the scorched-earth policy when retreating to starve the *Grand Armée* ↘
- d. It worked; Napoleon pulled out in October, 1812 ↘
- e. Of Napoleon's original nearly 600,000 soldiers, only 20,000 survived the cold, hungry trek across Eastern Europe (the rest died or deserted)

XII. Napoleon's abdication

- a. 1813 – Quadruple Alliance of Austria, Great Britain, Prussia, and Russia defeated Napoleon at the Battle of the Nations in Leipzig ↘
- b. 1814 – Napoleon abdicated and was exiled to Elba in the Mediterranean ↘
- c. Louis XVIII, brother of the guillotined Louis XVI, was made king of France; Louis XVIII was disliked, and the returning émigrés were distrusted ↘
- d. During the peace conference in Vienna, Napoleon escaped from Elba and Louis XVIII fled

XIII. The Hundred Days

- a. March 20, 1815
 - i. Napoleon marched triumphantly into Paris
- b. June 18, 1815

- i. Battle of Waterloo (in Belgium)
- c. Napoleon was defeated
 - i. Exiled to St. Helena in the South Pacific

XIV. Napoleon's legacy

- a. Died in 1821 on St. Helena
- b. Controversial historical figure
 - i. Pros
 - 1. Established meritocracy
 - 2. Held plebiscites
 - 3. Spread revolutionary ideals
 - ii. Cons
 - 1. Absolute ruler
 - 2. Ruled an empire with puppet kings
 - 3. Took away many rights of women
- c. International legacy
 - i. Destruction of the Holy Roman Empire led to the creation of Germany
 - ii. 1803 – sold the Louisiana Territory to the United States
 - iii. Created nationalistic fervor throughout the world
 - 1. Revolutionaries like Simon Bolivar admired Napoleon

XV. Congress of Vienna

- a. September, 1814, through June, 1815
- b. Austria, Great Britain, Prussia, and Russia sought to:
 - i. Restore the Old Regime
 - ii. Establish a balance of power

XVI. Important leaders at the Congress of Vienna

- a. Prince Clemens (or Klemens) von Metternich of Austria – wanted to roll back the clock to 1792
- b. Lord Robert Castlereagh of Great Britain – wanted to end the French military threat
- c. Tsar Alexander I of Russia – wanted to set up a “holy alliance” of Christian rulers who would united to suppress future revolutions
- d. Prince Charles Maurice de Talleyrand of France – shrewdly played these leaders off of one another to get a good deal for France

XVII. Results of the Congress of Vienna

- a. Redrew the European map to surround France with strong countries
- b. Principles of legitimacy – restored the hereditary (“legitimate”) monarchies
- c. Concert of Europe – European leaders would meet to address their concerns
- d. For the most part, large-scale war was avoided for 100 years (until World War I in 1914)
- e. Failure to realize the power of nationalism

XVIII. Review questions

- a. What political and social reforms did Napoleon make in the lands he conquered?
- b. Describe the events of the Peninsular War.
- c. Describe the map of Europe in 1812.
- d. What events brought about Napoleon's abdication?
- e. At what battle was Napoleon finally defeated?
- f. Was Napoleon a good leader? Why or why not? Look at this question from the perspective of a French peasant, French émigré, Spanish peasant, and Spanish noble.