

# The French Revolution

*An Age of Revolutions*  
(1750–1914)



The *ancien régime*

Reform and terror

Emperor Napoleon

## Thematic Icons



Economics and business



Geography and environment



Historical concepts and questions



Politics, government and citizenship



Religion and thought



Society and culture



War, diplomacy and foreign policy

**Icons:** For more detailed instructions, see the *User Guide*



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page



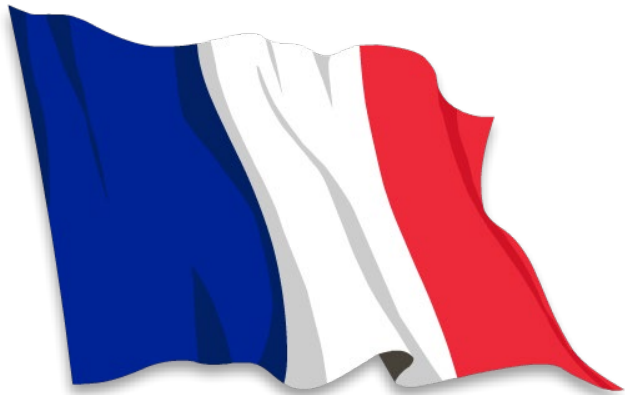
By the end of this section, you will have learned about Napoleon Bonaparte and his impacts and know about the following key points:

- Napoleon's rise to power
- Reform in France
- Rise and fall of Napoleon's Empire
- Congress of Vienna.



After the **Reign of Terror**, many in France wanted an end to the violence at home. In 1795, the **National Convention** used the army to put down an uprising in Paris, and created the **Directory**, a government run by five people.

Under the Directory, the nation was greatly divided between several factions. The economy remained weak and many people struggled to afford food, adding to the civil unrest.



At the same time, France fought many wars to defend the country from invasion and to raise money through conquests. The Directory became increasingly reliant on the army.





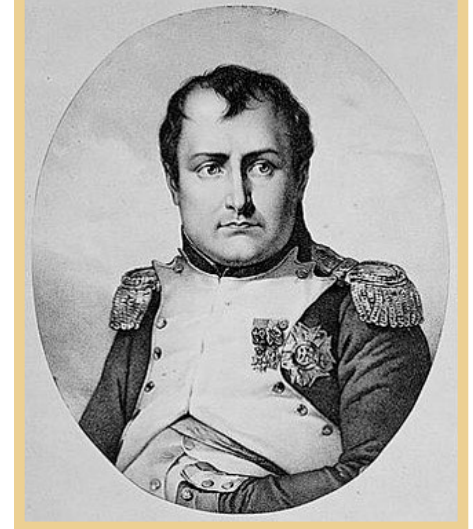
# The rise of Napoleon



With the growing importance of the army, many generals gained influence in the political arena. One such general was the brilliant strategist **Napoleon Bonaparte**.

Napoleon earned the loyalty and support of his troops, as well as many common people, during his successful military campaigns.

As the Directory became increasingly unpopular, Napoleon took his chance and seized power in November 1799 along with the politicians Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès and Roger Ducos. They formed the **Consulate** with Napoleon holding all of the real power.



Why are successful generals often very popular with common people, even those not in the army?





After coming to power, Napoleon made many changes to France. He combined many ideas of the Revolution with a strong government. He improved the economy, restored order and authority, and introduced the Napoleonic Code. Match each change to its description.

Press **start** to begin.

start



How did Napoleon address the needs of the people?



Following Napoleon's **coup d'etat** in 1799, Britain, Austria and Russia went to war with France in the hope of removing him from power. They failed, and France negotiated peace with all three countries by 1802. However, Napoleon's quest for expansion soon brought him back into conflict with the European nations. Watch this animation to find out about Napoleon's conquests.

Press **start** to begin.

**start**





Napoleon viewed Britain as his biggest enemy. In 1806, he used a naval blockade called the **Continental System** to restrict British trade, but it was ineffective. Britain launched its own blockade, which was successful due to its naval strength.

As well as Europe, Napoleon had ambitions in the New World. Slaves in Saint Domingue (now Haiti) rebelled in 1789 and Napoleon tried to restore order to the colony in 1801. However, this was met with fierce resistance and disease.

As a result, Napoleon decided to cut his losses in the Americas. He sold the **Louisiana Territory** to the US in 1803 for \$15 million.



How did the Louisiana Purchase affect the U.S.?





In an effort to control the whole of Europe, Napoleon made three costly mistakes. These events ultimately led to his downfall and the collapse of the French Empire.

Can you match each event to its description and outcomes?

Press **start** to begin.

**start**





Britain, Prussia, Austria, Russia and Sweden all joined forces against France following Napoleon's failed invasion of Russia. Napoleon suffered a critical defeat at Leipzig in 1813 and surrendered in 1814, giving up the throne and going into exile.



**Louis XVIII** ascended the throne but was unpopular. Napoleon escaped and quickly raised an army, regaining power for what is known as the **Hundred Days**.

However, Napoleon was defeated at the **Battle of Waterloo** by Britain and Prussia in June 1815. He was exiled to the island of St Helena, where he died in 1821.





The **Congress of Vienna** was a meeting of European leaders that aimed to deal with the aftermath of Napoleon's rule. It had three major aims: redrawing the map of Europe so France could not dominate, achieving a balance of power between states, and restoring and preserving the power of monarchies. Drag each statement to the correct place, depending on what it aimed to do.

Press **start** to begin.

start







# The impact of Napoleon's rule



Napoleon's rule had many major impacts on France.

Napoleon restored peace and brought together many different factions in France. He ended the Revolution and re-established relations with the Catholic Church. In establishing the Napoleonic Code, he protected property and eliminated privilege based on birth. However, he ruled with absolute power and used force to maintain this. Workers lost many privileges and he plunged Europe into ten years of war.



How did Napoleon's rule impact Europe?





Test your knowledge of the French Revolution with this quiz.  
Choose the correct answer to each question to see how much you can remember about the French Revolution.

Press **start** to begin.

start





Test your understanding of the French Revolution by recapping key terms and important people using this glossary. Press on the tabs and then each term to see a definition.  
Press **start** to begin.

start

