

The French Revolution and Napoleon**Lesson 3**

Napoleon's Empire

Key Terms and People

Napoleon Bonaparte military leader who seized power in France

coup d'état sudden takeover of a government

plebiscite vote by the people

lycée government-run public school

concordat agreement

Napoleonic Code complete set of laws set up by Napoleon that eliminated many injustices

Battle of Trafalgar British defeat of Napoleon's forces at sea

blockade forced closing of ports

Continental System Napoleon's policy of preventing trade and communication between Great Britain and other European nations

guerrilla Spanish peasant fighter

Peninsular War war that Napoleon fought in Spain

scorched-earth policy policy of burning fields and slaughtering livestock so that enemy troops would find nothing to eat

Waterloo battle in Belgium that was Napoleon's final defeat

Hundred Days Napoleon's last bid for power, which ended at Waterloo

Before You Read

In the last lesson, you read about the Revolution's extremes, including the Reign of Terror.

In this lesson, you will learn how Napoleon grabbed power and brought order to France.

As You Read

Use a chart to analyze the goals and results of Napoleon's actions as emperor of France.

NAPOLÉON SEIZES POWER; NAPOLÉON RULES FRANCE

How did Napoleon rise to power?

In 1795, **Napoleon Bonaparte** led soldiers against French royalists who

were attacking the National Convention. Napoleon used troops to take control of the French government. This was a **coup d'état**, or a sudden takeover of power. Napoleon held the powers of a dictator.

Lesson 3, *continued*

In 1800, a **plebiscite**, or vote of the people, approved a new constitution. Napoleon took power as first consul. He started **lycées**—new public schools for ordinary male citizens. He signed a **concordat**, or agreement, with the pope. This gave the Church back some power.

He wrote a new set of laws, called the **Napoleonic Code**, which gave all French citizens the same rights. However, the new laws took away many individual rights won during the Revolution. For example, they limited free speech and restored slavery in French colonies.

1. What was the Napoleonic Code?

Napoleon lost 300,000 troops during this **Peninsular War**.

Napoleon’s third mistake was perhaps his worst. In 1812, he tried to conquer Russia. As the Russians retreated, however, they followed a **scorched-earth policy**. They burned their fields and killed their livestock so Napoleon’s armies could not eat what they left behind. Thousands of soldiers died from the bitter cold and hunger on their way home. Others deserted. Napoleon entered Russia with more than 420,000 soldiers but left with only 10,000.

2. What happened to Napoleon’s soldiers in Russia?

NAPOLEON CREATES AN EMPIRE; NAPOLEON’S COSTLY MISTAKES

What mistakes did Napoleon make abroad?

Napoleon had hoped to make his empire larger in both Europe and the New World. Napoleon’s only loss during this time was to the British navy in the **Battle of Trafalgar**.

Napoleon loved power. But his empire fell because he made three big mistakes.

His first mistake was caused by his desire to crush Britain’s economy. In 1806, he ordered a **blockade** and stopped all trade between Britain and other European nations. Napoleon called this policy the **Continental System**. It was to make continental Europe self-sufficient. It did not work as planned. Soon the French economy, along with others on the European continent, weakened.

Napoleon’s second mistake was to make his brother king of Spain in 1808. With help from Britain, groups of Spanish peasant fighters called **guerrillas** fought Napoleon for five years.

NAPOLEON’S DOWNFALL

How was Napoleon defeated?

Britain, Russia, Prussia, Sweden, and Austria joined forces and attacked France. In 1814, Napoleon gave up his throne and was sent away to the tiny island of Elba off the Italian coast.

In March 1815, Napoleon escaped from Elba and returned to France. He took power and raised another army.

The rest of the European powers raised armies to fight against Napoleon. They defeated Napoleon in his final battle near a Belgian town called **Waterloo**. This defeat ended Napoleon’s last attempt at power, which was called the **Hundred Days**. He was then sent to a far-off island in the southern Atlantic Ocean. He died there in 1821.

3. What was Napoleon’s last attempt at power, and where did it end?

Lesson 3, *continued*

As you read about Napoleon, note the goals and results of some of his actions.

Actions	Goal(s)	Result(s)
1. Establishment of national bank and efficient tax-collection system		
2. Enacting Napoleonic Code of law		
3. Sending troops to Saint Domingue		
4. Selling Louisiana Territory to the United States		
5. Waging Battle of Trafalgar		