

# Napoleon: Empires

## Napoleon Becomes a Man of Destiny

**Grade level:** 7-12

**Subjects:** History, Language Arts

**Estimated Time of Completion:** 3 to 5 class periods

### I. INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

- To help students analyze the forces that shape character development, including the role of historical events.
- To help students contrast the ethos of the Ancien Regime with the new ideals awakened by the French Revolution.

### II. STANDARDS

This lesson correlates to the following national standards for history, established by the National Center for History in the Schools:

- Explain how the French Revolution developed from constitutional monarchy to democratic despotism to the Napoleonic Empire.
- Analyze leading ideas of the revolution concerning social equality, democracy, human rights, constitutionalism, and nationalism and assess the importance of these ideas for democratic thought and institutions in the 20th century.
- Explain how the revolution affected French society, including religious institutions, social relations, education, marriage, family life, and the legal and political position of women

This lesson correlates to the following national standards for language arts, established by MCREL at <http://www.mcrel.org/>:

- Demonstrates competency in the general skills and strategies of the writing process.
- Uses grammar and mechanical conventions in written composition.
- Gathers and uses information for research purposes.

### III. MATERIALS NEEDED

- A copy of Part One of the PBS video "Napoleon"
- Computers with Internet access

### IV. PROCEDURE

#### Overview:

This lesson is based on **Episode One "To Destiny"** of the four-part PBS series "Napoleon." It is suggested you show the hour-long video in 5 viewing segments (see below). Before viewing the video, students are asked to consider what has influenced their own lives and whether or not they believe in "destiny." At the end of the program they must assess what have been the most significant factors in shaping Napoleon's early life, including historical events of the period. The class, working in small groups (each group assigned to one of the 5 segments of the video), creates a "ladder" of the steps Napoleon took towards his destiny, analyzing what propelled his ascent at each step. At the conclusion of the lesson, students role play various people in Napoleon's formative years and hold a discussion about him.

For each segment of Episode One, discussion and teaching activities are also suggested. You can use these to enhance the ladder and role-play activities mentioned above, skip them altogether, or even use several of them in their own right if you only have time to show a few of the segments of the video.

All 5 viewing segments are listed below. If you are limited for time and cannot show all 5, choose segments 2, 3 and 5.

Segment 1: Napoleon's upbringing on Corsica, his mother and father, the move to France (approximately the first 13 minutes).

Segment 2: The family's move to France through Napoleon's training at the Ecole Militaire (from approximately 13 to 20 minutes into the film. This segment begins with the image of trees in winter).

Segment 3: The outbreak of the Revolution, Napoleon's return to Corsica, exile and return to France, the Battle of Toulon, promotion to full General. (from approximately 20 minutes to 38 minutes into the film. This segment begins with fighting scenes and booming cannon).

Segment 4: Napoleon falls in love with Josephine (from approximately 38 minutes to 44 minutes into the video. This segment begins with gentle scenes of Paris, a portrait of Napoleon and harp music).

Segment 5: Napoleon wins major battles against Austria and her ally, ending with the crossing of Lodi Bridge (from 44 minutes into the film until the end. This segment begins with images of the mountains).

### **Introductory Class Discussion:**

#### Part I: What is Destiny?

Episode One of "Napoleon" begins with Napoleon as a young man searching, like any other young person, for a sense of identity, and ends with Napoleon's conviction that he is a man of destiny—someone who would change the face of Europe. Once students can identify with the young Napoleon and his stormy adolescence, following his trajectory into history becomes much more spellbinding.

Ask students if they believe they have a destiny. If so, how will they find it, or will it find them? Distribute the three quotes below, or write them on the blackboard. Discuss how each one represents a different view of what destiny means. Ask students to look up the word in a dictionary. As you view Episode One with your students, return to the theme of destiny. Did Napoleon create his destiny by virtue of the fact that he believed he had one? What role did his individual talents and force of character play? What effect did the unfolding events of history play in shaping his life? How did he impose his will on the destiny of Europe?

"The longest journey  
Is the journey inwards  
Of him who has chosen his destiny"  
—Dag Hammarskjold (1905-1961)

"Sow a habit, and you reap a character,  
Sow a character, and you reap a destiny"  
—Anon.

"'Tis all a Checkerboard of Nights and Days  
Where Destiny with Men for Pieces Plays."  
—Edward FitzGerald (1809-1883)

Part II: What Factors Have Influenced Your Own Life? What Factors Influenced Napoleon's?

Before viewing the film, ask students what factors they think have influenced them most in their formative years. Distribute Activity Sheet 1. Tell students that the personal responses filled in on these sheets will not have to be turned in or shown to other students.

After students have filled in their charts, ask students to volunteer some of their observations about themselves. You might start by asking students what they wrote in the center of their charts and what they listed in the outermost peripheries. Ask students to compare how their charts reflect life in the 20th century, as opposed to life in the 18th or 19th centuries. As students watch Episode One and compare their lives to Napoleon's, ask them what differences or similarities they see.

Tell students that after viewing Episode One of "Napoleon" they will be asked to fill in Activity Sheet 2 for Napoleon's life, justifying their choices for what they believe influenced him most.

### **Visualizing and Analyzing Napoleon's Ascent "To Destiny"**

If you plan to show all 5 segments of the video and to complete the ladder activity, place students in one of 5 groups, each group corresponding to one of the 5 segments of Episode One. Members of each group have the task of taking notes on the steps that moved Napoleon up his ladder of success "to destiny" when you show that segment of the film. Students can also research other events that took place in Napoleon's life at this time. If in addition you plan to implement the suggested discussion questions and activities after a particular segment, the

students assigned to that segment may be exempted from those questions and activities while they work on their portion of the ladder.

After viewing their segment of Episode One, group members should meet and compare notes. How many "steps" did they find in their segment of the program? For each "step" the group must produce three index cards. (They can divide the work, or you can assign various tasks to group members.) These include:

1. A factual index card giving concise details of the step and the events leading up to it
2. A bold symbolic graphic to represent the step.
3. An analysis card which explains what moved Napoleon up a step.

They should consider the following as they analyze each step: Did Napoleon advance because of

- his birth or station in life
- his talents
- chance or luck
- his strategic use of historical events
- his connections to important people
- his own ambition

Help more advanced students contrast how Napoleon's life would have been different if he had lived all of it before the French Revolution. Older students can also research Napoleon's life in greater depth, adding in "steps" that may not have appeared in the video.

An example of a step might be as follows:

Card 1: Napoleon is promoted from acting Lieutenant-Colonel to Brigadier-General after the Battle of Toulon (1793).

Toulon, an important naval base in France, had welcomed the British into their city, turning their backs on the leaders of the French Revolution. Napoleon was sent to help wrest the city from the British after the artillery captain was wounded. There Napoleon devised a plan to seize the heights from which the French could bombard the British. He convinced his superiors that the plan would work, and it did. In the battle Napoleon was wounded in the thigh by an English bayonette.

Card 2: Napoleon with a bayonet thrust in his thigh, or a map of the Toulon harbor.

Card 3: Napoleon was promoted after this battle for several reasons. Luck played a role because he was called to fill in for someone else who was injured. However, Napoleon seized the opportunity fate gave him and demonstrated both his good strategic thinking and his own courage in the battlefield. His rapid promotion was aided by the fact that many of the French aristocrats in the army had fled France, making way for younger and less well-connected men to advance.

## Viewing the Video: Suggested Questions and Activities

Watch the video in 5 segments, allowing time in between each for discussion, reflection and note-taking.

Segment 1: Napoleon's upbringing on Corsica, his mother and father, the move to France (approximately the first 13 minutes).

Questions:

1. Historians have argued over the importance of Napoleon's Corsican heritage. What do you feel it explains about Napoleon?
2. Napoleon so hated having his native country conquered by the French, yet in the name of France he went on to be the greatest conqueror of other European countries the world had ever seen. How do you explain this paradox?
3. Napoleon loved his mother and disliked his father. Does this necessarily mean that she influenced him more? How did each parent influence Napoleon? What two sides of Napoleon can we see through the effect of each parent?
4. Do you think Napoleon's family did the right thing by deserting Corsica for France?

Segment 2: The family's move to France through Napoleon's training at the Ecole Militaire (from approximately 13 to 20 minutes into the film. This segment begins with the image of trees in winter).

Questions:

1. Napoleon is sent off to school at Brienne at the age of 9. It was five years before he saw his parents again. How would he have felt in this situation? How do you think it might have affected Napoleon's character and personality?
2. List all the factors that made Napoleon an "outsider" at both Brienne and the Ecole Militaire. In what way(s) can you identify with Napoleon's feelings in this role?
3. Why, under the Ancien Regime was there no possibility for Napoleon to reach the top ranks of his profession? What is it like to have a dream which seems impossible to fulfil because of society's strictures?
4. What about Napoleon's experiences at this time, as well as his reading and education, might have made him sympathetic to the ideals of the Revolution?
5. Isolated and withdrawn, Napoleon does not seem to be a "leader" of his classmates. What about his situation might have been preparing him for leadership nonetheless?

Activities:

1. Ask students to assume the role of a teacher and to write a school report for Napoleon at either Brienne or the Ecole Militaire. They should create a grading system, categories, and fill them in. As a teacher, they should write their impressions of this young man.
2. Assign students to write a letter home as an aristocratic student at the Ecole Militaire in which they describe this young Corsican.

3. Choose 5 class members to role-play students at the Ecole Militaire. Give to each one an index card on which you have written his or her French name and a brief "report card" you have created. The French students should range from a top student to a mediocre student.

Ask the "French" students to give a brief oral report on their academic and military careers thus far, elaborating a bit on what you have written for them. Then ask the class: Which of these students should receive the best commission upon graduating?

Next give to each "French" student a card on which you have described their "Family Background." These should range from a relative of the king, to minor nobility, to a commoner. Ask the "French" students to read them aloud.

Now give the highest commission and most preferred position to the relative of the king, no matter that he is the poorest student with the poorest accomplishments in the field.

Ask students in what ways the French Revolution will change this system.

Segment 3: The outbreak of the Revolution, Napoleon's return to Corsica, exile and return to France, the Battle of Toulon, promotion to full General (from approximately 20 minutes to 38 minutes into the film. This segment begins with fighting scenes and booming cannon).

Questions:

1. Ask students to watch Segment 3 with this overriding question in mind: Does Napoleon support the ideals of the French Revolution or is he merely an opportunist, using events to further his own career?
2. It is not until Napoleon returns to Corsica that he settles his "identity crisis." Sociologists study the many roles we all play in life simultaneously which sometimes come into conflict.

Ask students how the following dual roles, in certain situations, can create conflicting loyalties. For example, a student might have an exam to study for on the same night that a friend in crisis needs counseling.

student/friend  
daughter/sister  
American/immigrant

In what way was Napoleon forced to choose between being French and being a Corsican? What were some of the penalties he had to pay?

3. Why does the Battle of Toulon bring Napoleon to the attention of the French public for the first time?
4. How do you feel about the rising of Vendemiaire when Napoleon fires cannon into a mob that wishes to restore the monarchy in Paris? Were his actions justified or not? What do they tell us about Napoleon?
5. Dorothy Carrington, one of the historians in this segment says, "Ambition swallowed up his childhood hopes and failures." What does she mean by this statement? Can you imagine

something similar happening to you? How might Napoleon's fierce ambition and his sense of his "destiny" relate?

#### Activity:

1. Using the page titled "The French Revolution," make a chart which contrasts France under the Ancien Regime and France after the Revolution. Have students read the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. What rights do the citizens of France have after the Revolution that they did not have before? How might these changes affect Napoleon's opportunities to rise in the army? What has happened to many of the aristocrats who used to lead the army?

Segment 4: Napoleon falls in love with Josephine (from approximately 38 minutes to 44 minutes into the video. This segment begins with gentle scenes of Paris, a portrait of Napoleon and harp music).

#### Questions:

1. Return to the theme of destiny by asking students if they believe two people can be "destined" for one another. What does it show about Napoleon's view of his life that he inscribed Josephine's wedding gift with the words "To Destiny." What do you think he meant by this and why did he write it to her?
2. Divide the chalk board into three sections with the following headings:
  - o What Napoleon and Josephine share in common (character traits, background, ambitions, etc.).
  - o What Napoleon gains through an alliance with Josephine.
  - o What Josephine gains through an alliance with Napoleon.

#### Activity

1. As either Napoleon or Josephine, ask students to write a letter to a friend. How would each describe their ensuing romance? Or ask two students to role-play the parts of the lovers in a "cinema verite" style interview.

Segment 5: Napoleon wins major battles against Austria and her ally, ending with the crossing of Lodi Bridge (from 44 minutes into the film until the end. This segment begins with images of the mountains).

#### Questions:

1. What are some of the military strategies for which Napoleon would become famous? In what ways do Napoleon's tactics mark the end of the rules of warfare as played by the Ancien Regime, and usher in modern warfare?
2. What are some of the ways that Napoleon inspires loyalty in his troops? What makes him a charismatic general?
3. Is the Napoleon we see at Lodi Bridge the same Napoleon we have known up until now, or has a new side of the man emerged at this point?
4. Why do you think that Napoleon says that at Lodi Bridge "I foresaw what I might be?" How or why has he become a man of Destiny?

## Activity

1. Ask students to write an illustrated diary entry for a French soldier who met Napoleon at Lodi.

## Concluding Activities

Tell students to complete their Activity 2 Sheets. You may choose to have students write an essay as well, analyzing what they believe were the most formative influences on the young Napoleon. Hold a discussion in which students share and defend their choices.

Put together the ladder of Napoleon's ascent on a classroom wall. Each "step" will be composed of 3 index cards placed side by side. The next 3-card step will be placed above the first. You can design this as either a ladder or a staircase. At the top it should say "Destiny." Beginning with the Segment One team ask each group to give a brief oral report to the class explaining their choice of "steps" and their analysis of Napoleon's advancement. You could also assign a concluding essay on this topic.

Return to the three quotes at the beginning of this unit. Which view of destiny do students feel most applies to Napoleon? With which of these three quotes do they think Napoleon himself would have most agreed?

Optional Role Play: Assign students to play the following roles:

- Napoleon's mother, Letizia
- Napoleon's father, Joseph
- A school teacher from Brienne
- A classmate from Brienne
- A teacher from Ecole Militaire
- A classmate from Ecole Militaire
- The Corsican leader General Pauli
- Josephine Beauharnais
- Napoleon's brother, Jerome
- A soldier who fought with Napoleon at Toulon
- A soldier who fought with Napoleon at Lodi

A small group of moderators should be asked to prepare questions to ask the interviewees. After the panel has made its presentation to the class, other class members can pose questions as well.

The moderators' questions can include questions like:

- What was your impression of Napoleon in his formative years? Could you tell he was destined for greatness?
- What, if any, influence did you have on Napoleon? How did he influence you?
- What effect do you think the French Revolution made on Napoleon? Did it change his life, and if so how?



An alternative role-play could include Napoleon himself, with the other participants posing questions directly to him.

## **V. ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Students can be assessed on how thoroughly and thoughtfully they completed the Activity 2 Sheet "What Influenced Napoleon" and an accompanying essay if you assign one.
2. Students can be assessed for their participation in the ladder project, the teamwork they demonstrated, and the "steps" they completed, as well as an essay if you assign one.
3. Students can be assessed for their participation in the discussions and activities you may have implemented after viewing each segment of the film.

## **VI. EXTENSIONS/ADAPTATIONS**

1. Consider completing the ladder by adding more "steps" up Napoleon's ascent to destiny as the class completes its study of the entire Napoleonic Era.
2. Ask students to research the formative years of another major figure from the Revolutionary and Napoleonic eras. In a chart or in an essay, ask students to compare how character development and history intersected in the life of Napoleon as compared to the person they are researching.
3. Ask students to compare and contrast the rise of Napoleon to the rise of a leader in the 20th century. What role did destiny play? (Roosevelt's "rendezvous with destiny" speech comes to mind.) How important were birth and family connections, chance, the turn of historical events? Students could devise a chart of categories and fill them in for both characters, or write an essay.

# The Laws Live On

**Grade level:** 7-12

**Subjects:** Social Studies, History, Government

**Estimated Time of Completion:** 2 to 3 class periods

## I. INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

Students will use information they have learned from viewing parts of the PBS "Napoleon" series, study and research about the U.S. Constitution to compare the effects of Napoleon's civil code on France and the U.S. Constitution on America. Students will learn and study how these laws are interpreted over time. They will also compare and contrast the two legal systems these laws created.

## II. STANDARDS

This lesson correlates to the following national standards for history, established by MCREL at <http://www.mcrel.org/>:

- Understands the causes and consequences of political revolutions in the late 18th and early 19th centuries
- Understand the institutions and practices of government created during the Revolution and how these elements were revised between 1787 and 1815 to create the foundation of the American political system based on the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights.

## III. MATERIALS NEEDED

- A copy of the PBS "Napoleon" video series
- A copy of Napoleon's civil code
- A copy of the U.S. Constitution, particularly the Bill of Rights

## IV. PROCEDURE

1. Begin with a brainstorming session where you ask students to list as many of the Amendments as they can from the Bill of Rights. Continue by asking students to think about the first ten amendments and why the founding fathers believed they were necessary in order to make the U.S. a strong country. Be sure to discuss the fact that many people worked together as a group to form the Constitution. Discuss why the Constitution has lasted and been effective for so many years.
2. Now turn students' attention to Napoleon. Have them brainstorm a list of ideas and characteristics that come to their mind when they think of him. Guide students as they brainstorm so that they will hit on the idea that Napoleon was a lawmaker.
3. Show students **Episode One "To Destiny"**. Point out as you go that Napoleon came from humble beginnings and often felt different from those around him.

Watch only as far as the point leading up to Louis XVI's execution (beginning of tape to approximately 23:00). Pay special attention to the following cues:

- "It was the French Revolution that would set Bonaparte free." (approximately 16:50)
  - "His ambition was so great that it swallowed up small aims, like doing something in Corsica, and became the ambition to control France and control Europe, and then possibly the world." (approximately 22:00)
4. Have students write notes to answer the following questions as they view the Episode One:
    - In what ways did Napoleon feel like an outcast among his peers?
    - Why did Napoleon feel his military career would be limited by his Corsican background?
    - How did Napoleon feel the French Revolution would "set him free" and "open up" French society?
    - Why do you think these events made Napoleon feel like he wanted to rule the world?
  5. Students should discuss their answers to the above questions in small groups, or the teacher can facilitate a classroom discussion about these topics. The instructor should be sure that students see and understand that Napoleon felt that the previous social structure and class system limited one's potential simply because of background—people were not allowed to achieve above their level or move from one level to another. Ask for student opinions about how they would feel if this were the case for them. Even more interesting, ask students if they ever feel that in the U.S. we have a form of "class" system that "keeps people in their place."
  6. Students should then view **Episode Two "Mastering Luck"** beginning with the section where Napoleon secretly returns to France after the Egyptian campaign (approximately 10:30 to end). Pay special attention to the following cues:
    - "I am the Revolution." (approximately 15:00)
    - "A newborn government, he told his secretary, must dazzle and astonish." (approximately 17:00)
    - "Napoleon believed in government for the people, but not by the people." (approximately 18:40)
    - "...he wanted his regime to endure." (approximately 21:00)
  7. Students should answer the following questions as they view this segment:
    - What does Napoleon mean when he says, "I am the Revolution"?
    - Napoleon says, "A newborn government must dazzle and astonish." What do you think he means by this and how will his new government do these things?
    - It is said that the new government was "rule for the people, but not by the people." Why do you believe Napoleon wanted his government this way? How is this different than the way the U.S. government is structured?
    - Napoleon wanted his work to endure forever, so he appointed himself Emperor. Why would becoming an emperor make his work live long after he was gone?

Once students have finished viewing and answering questions, the teacher could facilitate some class discussion about the answers to the various questions. Another technique would be to stop the video after the information for each question is presented and allow students to work in small groups to come up with answers. They could then share those in a large group at the conclusion of the video.

8. Once discussion is finished, students should look specifically at the code of conduct that Napoleon authored and that French law is based upon today. Have students pick out what they believe are the strong or "good" parts of the code.
9. Now have students look for parts of the code that they disagree with or that they believe are weak.
10. Once the strengths and weaknesses of the code are found, they should be recorded on a large list that the whole class can see. The teacher should facilitate debates as they arise, since some ideas could be both strengths and weaknesses.
11. When the chart is complete, turn students' attention to the U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights. Have students pick out what they feel are the strengths and weaknesses of our governing document. Again, make the list of strengths and weaknesses and post it, with the teacher again facilitating debates as they arise.
12. Students can use what they have learned about both documents to draft a governing document of their own by choosing the strongest parts of Napoleon's civil code and the U.S. Constitution. Once students have decided which parts of each document should be included, they should construct the document and give it an appropriate title. Students should be able to explain why they chose to include what they did and why some elements were left out. This could be done as a large group activity or in small groups with each group presenting to the rest of the class. The document(s) should then be posted in the classroom for others to see or for future use/reference.

## **V. ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

Students could write a short written response that answers the following questions about the document they created above.

1. Why did you think it was important to include the ideas you chose for your governing document? Give specific examples or reasons.
2. Some ideas from Napoleon's Civil Code and the Bill of Rights were left out. Why did you think it was better not to include these ideas in your document? Give specific reasons or examples to support your decision.
3. Why do you believe the document you created could be a successful means for governing people? Explain your reasons.

## **VI. EXTENSIONS/ADAPTATIONS**

After completing the activity above, students could explore further by completing a piece of writing that discusses and examines one of the following questions:

1. When looking at strengths of the two documents and the fact that they have both endured for more than 200 years, discuss how a set of laws and ideas this old can still apply effectively to people today.
2. Over time, some interpretations of the laws and ideas listed in the Civil Code and the Bill of Rights may change or evolve based on the needs of the society. We can see this in the U.S. Constitution when we look at the process for changing amendments and the amendments that have been revised over time. Discuss an example of a change in the interpretation of the law that we see in our society today and whether or not you believe it would be beneficial to change

the law or its interpretation. (Hint: the debate over the right to bear arms, prayer in schools, etc.)

Students could choose a law that they feel should be changed. They could do research and develop specific ideas about how to change that law. They could then draft a letter to an appropriate lawmaker asking them to make the changes to the law they have learned about. This could be done with city, county, state, or federal laws. Addresses for legislators should be available from local election offices or boards.

# Hero or Tyrant?

**Grade level:** 7-12

**Subjects:** History, Language Arts

**Estimated Time of Completion:** 3 class periods to set up the assignment and show related segments of the video "Napoleon." 1 to 2 weeks of research, writing and meeting time for students.

## I. INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

- To help students learn, review and assess what they know about Napoleon and his era.
- To help students learn to take a position and to back up the position with evidence.
- To help students understand the relationship between point of view and historical interpretation.
- To help students practice their writing skills and learn about journalism.
- To help students learn how to work effectively in groups.

## II. STANDARDS

This lesson correlates to the following national standards for history, established by the National Center for History in the Schools:

- Explain how the French Revolution developed from constitutional monarchy to democratic despotism to the Napoleonic Empire.
- Analyze leading ideas of the revolution concerning social equality, democracy, human rights, constitutionalism, and nationalism and assess the importance of these ideas for democratic thought and institutions in the 20th century.
- Explain how the revolution affected French society, including religious institutions, social relations, education, marriage, family life, and the legal and political position of women.
- Describe how the wars of the revolutionary and Napoleonic period changed Europe and assess Napoleon's effects on the aims and outcomes of the revolution.

This lesson correlates to the following national standards for language arts, established by MCREL at <http://www.mcrel.org/>:

- Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies of the writing process.
- Uses grammar and mechanical conventions in written composition.
- Gathers and uses information for research purposes.
- Demonstrates competence in the stylistic and rhetorical techniques in the writing process.

## III. MATERIALS NEEDED

- The four-part PBS video "Napoleon," specifically episodes 2, 3 and 4.
- Access to computers with Internet access for writing and research.

## IV. PROCEDURE

## **Overview**

This unit asks students to assess Napoleon's career and to decide if he was a hero or a tyrant.

The time is 1815. Napoleon has been exiled for good, this time to St. Helena. Louis XVIII has been restored to the throne. Meanwhile in Vienna, various European heads of state and diplomats are meeting to devise a new order for Europe.

Students are assigned to a team. Each team must produce a newspaper from 1815 which assesses Napoleon's career. Each journal must take the editorial stance that Napoleon is either a hero or a tyrant. To bring the Napoleonic era to life, students will also publish articles on the arts, sciences, and fashion of the times.

### **Defining "hero" and "tyrant"**

How do students define the terms "hero" and "tyrant"? Divide the blackboard into two columns, one for each category. Ask students to name people from any era in history (including our own) who they feel deserve to be designated "hero/heroine" or "tyrant." Hopefully their choices will engender some lively debate. After the class has agreed upon at least four names in each category, ask the class to list some of the attributes of the people on their lists. From the attributes they name try to get a working definition of both labels.

Next ask a student to read aloud a dictionary definition for each word. (Both words have Greek derivatives.) Now pose the question: Are these terms mutually exclusive? Is it possible that a hero could be a tyrant or a tyrant a hero? Regardless of the conclusion students reach on this conundrum, explain that in the newspapers they will write, students will have to view Napoleon as one or the other, much as at trial a lawyer must lend support wholeheartedly to the side he or she defends.

Invite students to probe deeper into defining these two terms by posing the following questions, or encouraging students to pose their own:

- Did Napoleon do more to preserve the legacy of the French Revolution or to destroy it?
- Although Napoleon assumed dictatorial powers, he became First Consul as well as Emperor with the enthusiasm and approval of the French people. Should this affect how we judge him in the role of "tyrant"?
- Must we assume that all conquerors throughout history are villains? When, if ever, can a conqueror be hero?
- Did Napoleon conquer others for a higher purpose, or only for his own glory?
- Should a leader's personal and romantic life be factored into the assessment of hero or tyrant, and if so why or why not?

### **Introducing the newspaper assignment**

Ask students how they might feel if they were living in 1815 after Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo. Would they rejoice? Would they be fearful that what might come next would be worse? Would they mourn the passing of their hero's star?

List on the blackboard several hypothetical French characters such as:

- An aristocratic lady who fled France during the Revolution after several relatives were guillotined.
- A worker in Paris who was among those who stormed the Bastille in 1789.
- A soldier who fought with Napoleon at the Battle of Austerlitz in 1805.
- A French mother who lost two sons in the Retreat from Moscow in 1812 and who lives in a village with families still grieving for other young men who died during the many years of warfare under Napoleon's rule.
- A bureaucrat in the National Bank (created by Napoleon) who would not formerly have merited a government position under the Ancien Regime.
- A recipient of the Legion of Honor, established in 1802 by Napoleon.
- A priest whose church was desecrated during the French Revolution.
- A French Jew who, thanks to the Revolution and Napoleon's enlightened policies, is now a citizen.

Discuss with the class how these people might have reacted to the news of Napoleon's defeat and why. Would they all necessarily share the same viewpoint? Why or why not?

Now explain that students will be put into teams to publish newspapers. Half the class will be assigned to write for a newspaper which supports Napoleon, the other will write for a newspaper which is a detractor. Divide the class into the two halves (without yet assigning them their newspaper teams) to watch sections of the video "Napoleon."

### **Showing Sections of the Film**

Explain to students that they are going to watch several excerpts from the video "Napoleon" and that they should look for incidents from Napoleon's career that support their viewpoint.

From **Episode Two**, begin with the image of the clock, approximately 27 minutes into the film and end at approximately 44 minutes into the film with the image of the flower and the bee. This excerpt covers the 18 Brumaire coup that abolishes the Directory as well as the accomplishments of Napoleon as Consul (e.g. Napoleonic code, establishment of the state schools, the central bank, etc.)

From **Episode Three**, start 8 minutes into the film and end at approximately 34 minutes into it with images of fields of stubble. This covers one of Napoleon's greatest moments on the battlefield: Austerlitz.

Then show either **Episode Four** - the first 5 minutes which covers Napoleon's disastrous invasion of Spain.

or

**Episode Four** - approximately 13 minutes into the film with the image of the fire and end at approximately 24 minutes in with the images of horses and sabers. This covers the battles of Borodino and the retreat from Moscow.



## **Newspaper Staffs Get to Work**

Divide the class into newspaper staffs. For 30 students you might create six teams of five, three for Napoleon and three against. If possible, students should write two articles each. Create enough roles on the newspaper staff so that each member of the team has a function such as:

- Editor-in-Chief - in charge of coordinating assignments, calling meetings, and insuring that the newspaper articles reflect a consistent point of view.
- Copy Editor - in charge of proofreading articles for grammar and style.
- Layout Designer - in charge of "cutting and pasting" articles into columns or using a computer software program to help create the layout.
- Pictures Editor - in charge of downloading and selecting pictures from the Web, or assigning students to draw "etchings" which can be pasted or scanned in.
- Masthead Designer - in charge of designing the masthead, creating the newspaper's motto.
- Headline Writer - in charge of seeing that each article has a dramatic and appropriate headline.

## **Assigning Topics for News Articles**

Either the teacher or the team, with the help of the Editor-in-Chief, should assign the topics. The team should decide on the name of the paper, where it is being published, and who its main readership might be. The Editor-in-Chief should make sure that his or her newspaper has at least one article in each of the following categories:

- Napoleon's heritage, early life and education (1769 - 1792).
- Napoleon's rise to power, from Toulon through the invasion of Egypt (1793 -1799).
- The Consulate, from Napoleon's seizure of power through renewal of war with Great Britain (1800-1803).
- The Empire, from Napoleon's coronation through the Treaty of Tilsit (1804-1807).
- The Empire, from the invasion of Spain to Waterloo (1808-1815).
- A newsbreaking event of the day - 1815 (Congress of Vienna closes, defeat at Waterloo, Louis XVIII returns, etc)
- Editorials - summaries of the Napoleonic era which reflect the viewpoint of the paper; predictions for the future of Europe now.
- Arts, sciences, fashion, literature reviews (Artists of the day include musicians Beethoven, Liszt, and Rossini, writers Chateaubriand, Washington Irving, Jane Austen, Byron, Shelley, Mme. De Stael, and Goethe, painters Ingres, Constable, and Goya. Early steamships and steam power engines are being field tested at this time, and Lamarck is writing about biological species. For an excellent listing see: *The Timetables of History* by Bernard Grun, Simon & Schuster, 1991.)

They should not try to cover all the events of Napoleon's career, but rather pick and choose those which will support their paper's point of view.

## **Writing News Articles**

Remind students that they are neither writing personal essays, nor encyclopedia articles—they are writing news articles. When President Clinton's term is over, both Republican and Democratic newspapers will assess his two terms in office. However, only in the editorials will

the papers directly express the editor's viewpoint. Students need to realize that the case for or against Napoleon will rest with the facts they present, although they can to some extent pick and choose those facts. Remind them that they need to present events as if they have happened in their own lifetimes. Encourage them to find and use contemporaneous quotes on the PBS Napoleon Web site, in books or on the Internet. They can interview imaginary people as well (e.g. a soldier at Waterloo), but what he or she recounts must incorporate the historical record.

You can review journalistic writing style by bringing in current-day news articles. Students should study lead sentences to observe how journalists incorporate the 5 W's (who, what, when, where and why) and for how they get a "hook" that interests the reader. More advanced classes should be introduced to the much more elaborate and embellished writing style of 19th century authors whom they might try to emulate. For example, read aloud the opening passages of Charles Dickens's novel, *A Tale of Two Cities* or Thomas Carlyle's history, *The French Revolution*.

## **V. ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Students can be evaluated for their participation in class discussions led by the teacher, as well as how cooperatively they worked on their newspaper teams.
2. Students' news articles can be judged according to a specified rubric by their teammates, or by other student readers of their papers and/or by the teacher.
3. News articles should reflect factual mastery of the Napoleonic era and an understanding of how point of view affects interpretation.

## **VI. EXTENSIONS/ADAPTATIONS**

1. Student newspapers should be published and distributed either by Xeroxing them or by having them published on your school's Web site. It is important that members of opposing sides read each other's papers.
2. For an even more complex look at point of view, you can suggest that some papers be published outside of France, for example from the United States (then fighting the British), Britain, Austria, Russia (or any other ally in the fight against Napoleon), or a Jewish press anywhere in Europe (Napoleon liberated the Jews from ghettos throughout the lands he conquered).
3. Lead the class in a series of informal or formal debates about Napoleon. Hold a final vote to establish whether the class believes Napoleon was a hero or a tyrant.
4. Compare contemporaneous views of Napoleon with what historians think today. Start by investigating the PBS website on Napoleon, especially the section "The Man and the Myth."
5. As students continue their study of European history following the Napoleonic era, ask them if what they have subsequently learned changes their views of Napoleon and his legacy.
6. Ask students to examine a controversial figure from the 20th century in light of the hero versus tyrant controversy. For example, who might consider Ho Chi Minh or General Douglas MacArthur to be a hero rather than a tyrant, or a tyrant rather than a hero, and why?

# Church and State

**Grade level:** 7-12

**Subjects:** Social Studies, History, Government, Religion

**Estimated Time of Completion:** 3 to 5 class periods

## I. INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

Students will use information they have learned from the PBS "Napoleon" series along with other examples from history to examine the separation of church and state in national governance. Students will study world governments that practice the separation of church and state and those that did not. Students will then analyze the effectiveness of the various governments.

## II. STANDARDS

This lesson correlates to the following national standards for history, established by MCREL at <http://www.mcrel.org/>:

- Understands the causes and consequences of political revolutions in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.
- Understand the institutions and practices of government created during the Revolution and how these elements were revised between 1787 and 1815 to create the foundation of the American political system based on the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights.

## III. MATERIALS NEEDED

- A copy of the PBS "Napoleon" video series
- Computers with Internet access
- Art supplies

## IV. PROCEDURE

1. Begin by discussing what it means to separate church and state in national governance. It would probably be helpful to give several examples. Examples should be chosen by the teacher and relate to material students have studied previously. The teacher could then ask students to generate examples they know of as well. One example might be the provisions established by the U.S. government in the Bill of Rights; another contemporary example would be the Taliban in Afghanistan.
2. Have students brainstorm a list of reasons why someone might want to connect the church with national government. Post the list in a prominent place in the classroom and label it "Church and State Together." The teacher might begin by providing an example such as: A person might want to keep church and state together in government in order to make people obey by making them think that by refusing some aspect of government, they are disobeying their religion.
3. Next have students brainstorm and list reasons why keeping church and state together when governing could be a bad thing. Post the list next to the previous one and label it "Keeping

Church and State Separate." Again, the teacher might begin by providing an example such as the fact that many countries, such as the U.S., have people who practice a variety of religions or no religion at all. By bringing religion into government, some groups could feel alienated and want to change the government or not follow laws because of religious influences.

4. Explain to students that Napoleon used the church to help him establish himself as the leader of France. Then have students view the following portions of **Episode 2: "Mastering Luck"** beginning with the section where he amends the constitution and gains power for life (approximately 13:00 to end). They should pay special attention to recording information that will help them answer the following questions
  - o What was the Concordat that was signed in 1801?
  - o How did the Concordat secure power?
  - o When Napoleon appointed himself Emperor in 1804, why did he involve the Pope in the ceremony?
5. After viewing, discuss the various answers students had to the questions listed above. Ask students to write a brief paragraph on how and why they believe Napoleon used religion to control the people of France.
6. Remind students that Napoleon compares himself to Alexander the Great and Caesar many times. Have them begin their research by looking at how these two men used religion as part of their governments. Students should record specific ways these leaders used religion in their rule. They should also record the results of using religion as part of the government. Was it successful or not, and why?
7. Once students have gathered their information about leaders who mixed church and state, they should begin focusing on a government that split the two, such as the current U.S. government. Students should research ways the U.S. government separates church and state. Students should look for reasons why the U.S. has chosen to keep church and state separate, and they should record whether or not they believe the U. S. government has been successful with this.
8. Students might also examine briefly how various presidential candidates have addressed religious issues in their campaigns and how religion affects campaign issues. Some topics for discussion might include school prayer, abortion, and evolution vs. creationism.
9. Now that research is complete, have students create a visual representation of what they have learned by making a poster-sized collage or drawing, a timeline, a T Chart, or even a Venn Diagram that contains what they have learned about the separation of church and state.
10. Once students have finished creating their visual presentations, they should share them with the class or a small group. They should then be posted for others to see and study.

## **V. ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

Create a scoring guide for the visual representation and/or oral presentation of what was learned. Be sure to have students identify specifically what they learned from their research about Caesar, Alexander the Great, Napoleon, and the U.S. government and the way they addressed the separation of church and state.

## **VI. EXTENSIONS/ADAPTATIONS**

1. Imagine you live in a country where church and state are not separated. Write a diary entry, short story, or letter to a friend describing how your daily activities are different from the way

they used to be before this new government was put into place. Discuss whether you like or dislike this new form of government.

2. Write and perform a play or skit that shows the different way of life you have described in activity 1 above. Be sure the audience knows your opinion of the separation of church and state when the play/skit is finished.