

### SSWH14 Analyze the Age of Revolutions



**Element C: Explain Napoleon's rise to power, the role of geography in his defeat, and the consequences of France's defeat for Europe**

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#### Napoleon's Rise to Power

- Napoleon Bonaparte was a successful and popular general during the French Revolution.
  - This popularity combined with the exhaustion that the French people felt after ten years of revolution gave Napoleon the opportunity to seize power in 1799.
- The French people were ready for a strong leader who could restore order. When Napoleon organized a military coup and took power, it was received with delight by the French people.
  - A plebiscite held in 1800 confirmed this when the French people overwhelmingly voted to approve a constitution that gave almost total power to Napoleon as the First Consul of the French Republic.
  - The French people's love of Napoleon grew as he instituted a series of reforms that upheld the popular changes made during the revolution like equality under law and private property rights while rolling back unpopular changes like the restrictions on the Catholic Church.
  - Napoleon also instituted a series of new reforms that proved very popular including a national bank, national public education, and the Napoleonic Codes that created a uniform system of law for the whole country.
    - While the Napoleonic Codes limited civil liberties the order and prosperity that Napoleon brought to France ensured his popularity with the people.



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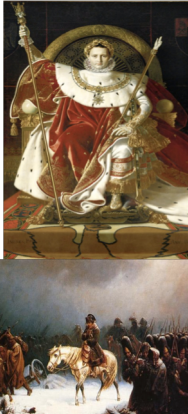
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#### The Role of Geography in Napoleon's Defeat

- Napoleon was so popular that in 1804 he was able to crown himself the Emperor of France with the support of the French voters. As emperor, Napoleon set out to create a true empire for France.
  - In a series of military victories French armies defeated their European neighbors and created the largest European empire since Rome.
- Napoleon's endless ambition proved to be his demise however.
  - In 1812 he decided to lead an army of 600,000 into Russia to punish the country for selling grain to France's enemy Britain.
    - The Russian Czar ordered his troops to lure the French army deep into Russia and destroy everything as they retreated.
    - In the fall of 1812 the French army took the city of Moscow, however before retreating the Russians burned the city. Lacking shelter, food, and supplies Napoleon was forced to order his army back to Europe.
    - Marching back across Russia in November proved terribly destructive to Napoleon's army. Men died from ambushes by Russian troops, exhaustion, hunger, and the cold.
  - When Napoleon returned to France he only had 30,000 soldiers left.



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**Consequences for France's Defeat for Europe**

- After Napoleon's defeat in Russia his European enemies banded together to remove him from power.
  - A combined army of Russian, Prussian, British, and Austrian soldiers forced Napoleon to abdicate in 1814.
- Napoleon briefly went into exile on the island of Elba in the Mediterranean.
  - He returned to France in 1815 and attempted to restore his power but he was finally defeated at Waterloo and permanently exiled to the island of St. Helena in the South Atlantic.
- With Napoleon gone diplomats from Britain, Russia, Austria, and Prussia met at the Congress of Vienna.
  - Their goal was to firmly squash the spirit of liberalism and nationalism that made the French Revolution and Napoleon possible. Generally, this goal was realized.
  - While liberal nationalism led to revolutionary movements in Italy and Spain the conservative order established at the Congress of Vienna was able to dominate for the next 30 years.



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