

Napoleon Bonaparte

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Early Life & Rise to Power

- Napoleon was born on the island of Corsica – a French island in the Mediterranean. His family was actually of Italian descent, and Italian was Napoleon's first language. Consequently, he spoke French with a marked accent, and was often teased as a youth.
- As a teen, Napoleon enrolled in an elite French military school. He showed little promise as a student, but he excelled in strategy and battle tactics.
- Napoleon first gained the attention of the French government (the Directory) when he brutally suppressed a royalist uprising. He packed buckshot and shrapnel into cannons and opened fire on the mob, killing more than a thousand.
- As a reward, Napoleon was made the head of France's army in Italy.



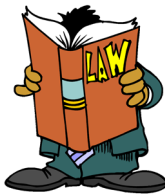
The Coup d'Etat

- Napoleon led successful military campaigns and as a result, became very popular and politically influential back in France.
 - In 1799, he was defeated by the British in Egypt. Napoleon wanted to rule France, so he hurried back to Paris, and hoped that the news of his defeat was not yet known to the people of France.
 - Upon arriving in Paris, Napoleon and two of the Directors, plotted and succeeded in overthrowing the Directory.
- This *coup d'etat* was successful because Napoleon had the backing of the French army.
- It wasn't long before Napoleon seized total control of the government and



Napoleonic Code

- Perhaps Napoleon's most important contribution was his set of civil laws known as the *Code Civil*, or the Code Napoleon.
- The Code dealt with law of persons, property and acquisition of property. This was the first national set of laws in France. Until this point, regional feudal laws and customs had dominated France.
- This code forever swept away privilege and title of the wealthy French nobility, and legalized freedom of religion. The code did *not* provide people with greater political freedoms, however.
- Napoleon's code had great influence not only in France, but in other nations where he implemented it after he conquered them.



Achievements of Napoleon

- As a ruler, Napoleon was quite effective, enacting numerous important reforms.
- Napoleon created a *National Bank*. This allowed the government greater control of the economy and inflation.
- He also established a system of *Public Education*. In Napoleon's Lycées (schools), students were admitted based on ability, not based on wealth or family connections.
- He also created a *Uniform Tax Code*, which more fairly distributed taxation, and closed tax loop holes. It also ensured taxes would end up in the National treasury, not in the pockets of collectors.
- Napoleon also implemented a series of *Public Works*, including construction of new roads and a sewer system.

