

Reading Essentials and Study Guide



The French Revolution and Napoleon, 1789–1815

Lesson 4 The Fall of Napoleon and the European Reaction

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What causes revolution? How does revolution change society?

Reading HELPDESK

Academic Vocabulary

civil involving the general public or civic affairs

constitution the basic principles and laws of a nation, state, or social group that determine the powers and duties of the government and guarantee certain rights to the people in it

Content Vocabulary

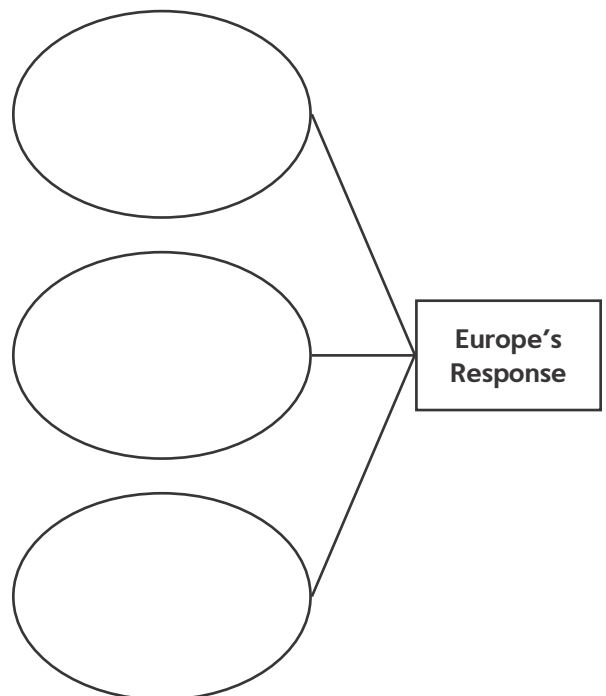
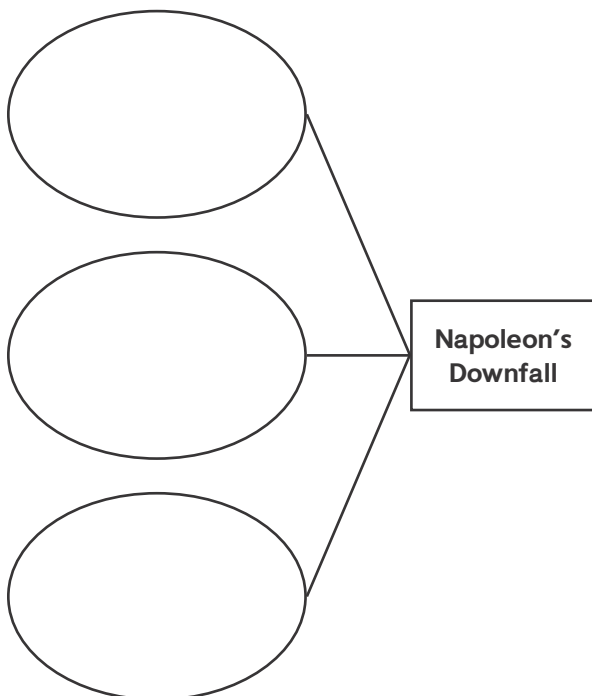
principle of intervention the idea that great powers have the right to send armies into countries where there are revolutions to restore legitimate governments

conservatism a political philosophy based on tradition and social stability, favoring obedience to political authority and organized religion

liberalism a political philosophy originally based largely on Enlightenment principles, holding that people should be as free as possible from government restraint and that civil liberties—the basic rights of all people—should be protected

TAKING NOTES: *Differentiating*

ACTIVITY As you read, use a diagram like the one below to summarize what led to Napoleon’s downfall and how leaders in Europe attempted to restore order.



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IT MATTERS BECAUSE

After the disorder of the French revolutionary years and the final fall of Napoleon, European rulers wanted to return to a time of order. They wanted conservative governments and a balance of power among nations to prevent wars. Liberals and nationalists, however, struggled to achieve more liberal governments with freedoms guaranteed in a constitution, and to form new nations.

The Fall of Napoleon

Guiding Question *How did Napoleon lose his empire?*

Napoleon's downfall began in 1812 when he decided to invade Russia. Within only a few years, he had totally lost power.

Russia had refused to remain in the Continental System. As a result, Napoleon decided to invade Russia to punish the country for ignoring his rule. He knew the risks of invading such a large country. He also knew that if he did nothing, other nations would follow Russia's lead.

Napoleon's Grand Army of more than 600,000 men entered Russia in June of 1812. If Napoleon wanted to succeed, he had to win a quick victory. The Russian forces refused to fight, however. Instead they retreated for hundreds of miles. As they retreated, they burned their own villages and countryside to keep Napoleon's army from finding food. When the Russians did fight at Borodino, Napoleon's troops had a victory, but it was not a major one and it cost many lives.

Moscow was on fire when the Grand Army finally reached it. The French army had little food and few supplies, and as a result, Napoleon abandoned the Russian capital in late October. As the winter snows began, Napoleon led the "Great Retreat" west across Russia. Thousands of soldiers starved and froze along the way. When the Grand Army finally arrived back in Poland in January 1813, there were fewer than 40,000 soldiers left.

The military disaster caused leaders in other European states to take action. They attacked the crippled French army. Paris was captured in March 1814. Napoleon was soon exiled, or forced out of the country. He was sent to the island of Elba, off the northwest coast of Italy. The victorious powers restored monarchy to France. Louis XVIII, brother of the executed King Louis XVI, was put on the throne.

The new king of France had little support. The French people were not ready to lose the glory of empire. Napoleon was not ready to give up either. Restless in exile, he left Elba and secretly came back into France. The new king sent troops to capture Napoleon. When the troops arrived, Napoleon opened his coat and addressed them directly. He declared that he was still their emperor, and he challenged the soldiers to kill him if they wanted.

No one fired a shot. Instead, the troops shouted, "Long live the Emperor!," and they supported Napoleon. On March 20, 1815, Napoleon entered Paris in triumph.

Russia, Great Britain, Austria, and Prussia responded to Napoleon's return. They promised to defeat the man they called the enemy of peace in the world. In the meantime, Napoleon gathered together another army. It contained devoted veterans who came from all over France. He then got ready to attack the allied troops across the border in Belgium.

At Waterloo in Belgium on June 18, 1815, Napoleon met a combined British and Prussian army under the Duke of Wellington. The French suffered a bloody defeat. This time, the victorious allies exiled Napoleon to St. Helena, a small island in the south Atlantic. Napoleon remained in exile until his death in 1821, but the memory of Napoleon remained a part of French political life for many decades.

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networks

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Reading Progress Check

Analyzing How did Napoleon’s disaster in Russia affect both his Grand Army and the French nation?

European Reaction

Guiding Question *Why did the turmoil of the French revolutionary years result in a conservative European reaction?*

After the defeat of Napoleon, European rulers moved to restore the old order. The goal of the victors—Great Britain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia—was to undo these changes. This was the goal when leaders met at the Congress of Vienna in September 1814 to arrange a final peace settlement that ended the Napoleonic Wars.

The Austrian foreign minister Prince Klemens von Metternich (MEH• tuhr •nihk) was the most influential leader at that meeting in Vienna. Metternich claimed the principle of legitimacy guided him. By this, he meant that he wanted the monarchs from the royal families who had ruled before Napoleon to return to power. The Congress believed that this return to the past order would ensure peace and stability in Europe. The victorious powers had already returned the Bourbon king to the French throne in 1814.

Concerns about power on the part of European countries were addressed at the Congress of Vienna. The great powers rearranged territories in Europe. They believed that this would form a new balance of power. They wanted to keep any one country from dominating Europe, or becoming more powerful than the other countries. In order to do so, they had to balance political and military forces to make sure all of the victorious countries would remain independent. For example, Russia had gained territories. As a result, to balance Russia’s gains, the Congress of Vienna gave Prussia and Austria new territories.

The decisions of the Congress of Vienna were a victory for those who wanted to contain the forces of change that the French Revolution had unleashed. These rulers, like Metternich, believed in the political philosophy known as **conservatism**. Conservatism is based on tradition and it values social stability.

Most conservatives at that time supported obedience to political authority, such as a monarch. They also believed that organized religion was necessary to keep order in society. Conservatives feared revolutions. They would not accept demands from people who wanted either individual rights or representative governments.

To maintain the new balance of power, Great Britain, Russia, Prussia, and Austria (and later France) agreed to continue to meet at conferences. At these conferences, the states discussed their common interests and how to maintain peace in Europe. These meetings came to be called the Concert of Europe.

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Over time, these great powers adopted a **principle of intervention**. According to this principle, the great powers had the right to send armies into other countries. If there was a revolution in another country, they could send troops there to restore legitimate monarchs to their thrones. The British refused to accept the principle, however. British leaders argued that no country should interfere in the internal affairs of other states. However, the other countries acted on the principle. They used military forces to stop revolutions in Spain and Italy.



Reading Progress Check

Identifying Central Issues Why did European leaders think it was important to apply conservatism at the Congress of Vienna?

Forces of Change

Guiding Question *What happened to revolutionary ideas after the French Revolution was over?*

Between 1815 and 1830, conservative governments throughout Europe worked to maintain the old order. However, powerful forces for change also were at work. Liberalism and nationalism were sweeping across Europe.

Liberalism is a political philosophy that grew out of Enlightenment ideas. **Liberalism** held that people should be as free as possible from government control. Liberals believed that **civil** liberties—the basic rights of all people—must be protected. These civil liberties included equality before the law. That is, everyone deserved to be treated in the same way by the government. Civil liberties also included freedom of assembly, speech, and the press. Liberals believed that all these human rights should be guaranteed by a document such as the American Bill of Rights.

Many liberals favored a government ruled by a **constitution**. This belief was called constitutionalism. For example, in a constitutional monarchy, a king must follow the laws of the constitution. Liberals believed that written documents would help guarantee people's rights.

Most liberals wanted all religions to be tolerated, or allowed to be practiced. They opposed churches established by the government. They wanted separation of church and state. Liberals also demanded the right to peacefully oppose, or speak out against, the government. They believed that a representative assembly (legislature) elected by qualified voters should make laws. These liberal ideals were like republicanism. Republicanism is the belief that a government's power comes from the rule of law and the citizens who are allowed to vote.

Liberals at this time, however, did not believe that everyone had a right to vote. They thought only men who owned property should have the right to vote and hold office. Liberalism was favored by middle-class men, especially those who ran industries and businesses. They wanted voting rights for themselves so that they could share power with the landowning classes. The liberals feared mob rule. They had little desire to have the lower classes share political power.

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Nationalism was an even more powerful force for change. Nationalism arose when people began to see themselves as part of a community or a nation. This community had its own languages, institutions, and customs. In earlier centuries, people's loyalty was to the king or to their own town or region. In the nineteenth century, people began to believe that their main loyalty was to the whole nation.

Nationalism did not become a popular force for change until the French Revolution. From then on, nationalists came to believe that each nationality should have its own government. For example, the Germans were separated into many principalities, or small states. They wanted national unity, a German nation-state with one central government for all Germans. People under the rule of a different country wanted the right to establish their own governments. For example, the Hungarians wanted their own Hungarian ruler, not the Austrian emperor.

Nationalism, then, was a threat to the existing order. A united Germany, for example, would upset the balance of power established at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. In the same way, an independent Hungarian state would mean the breakup of the Austrian Empire. Conservatives feared such changes, and they tried to repress nationalism.

Nationalists gained a great deal of support from liberals. Most liberals believed only people who ruled themselves could be free. Each group of people should have its own state.



Reading Progress Check

Identifying Why did nationalism become popular after the French Revolution?
