

# Famous Portraits Series







## Napoleon Bonaparte

Emperor of the French (1804-1815)

Born: 15 August 1769

Died: 5 May 1821 (Aged 51)

Issue 2

		
<p><b>1. Lieutenant-Colonel in the Republican Army</b> Artist: Henri Philippoteaux (1792)</p>	<p><b>2. General in the Italian Campaign</b> Artist: Antoine-Jean Gros (1796)</p>	<p><b>3. First Consul</b> Artist: Antoine-Jean Gros (1800)</p>
		
<p><b>4. Napoleon I 'Emperor of the French'</b> Artist: François Gérard (1804)</p>	<p><b>5. Emperor Napoleon in his study at the Tuileries</b> Artist: Jacques-Louis David (1812)</p>	<p><b>6. Napoleon at Fontainebleau Palace before his exile at Elba.</b> Artist: Paul Delaroche (1814)</p>

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### Image Sources:

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleon#/media/File:Napoleon\\_-\\_2.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleon#/media/File:Napoleon_-_2.jpg)
- [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/41/Barend\\_van\\_Orley\\_-\\_Portrait\\_of\\_Charles\\_V\\_-\\_Google\\_Art\\_Project.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/41/Barend_van_Orley_-_Portrait_of_Charles_V_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)
- File:Gros - First Consul Bonaparte (cropped).png - Wikimedia Commons
- [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fran%C3%A7ois\\_G%C3%A9rard\\_-\\_Napoleon\\_I\\_001.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fran%C3%A7ois_G%C3%A9rard_-_Napoleon_I_001.JPG)
- <https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.46114.html>
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleon#/media/File:DelarochNapoleon.jpg>

**Napoleon Bonaparte** was born in Corsica one year after France bought that island from the republic of Genoa. This event made Napoleon a subject of the French King and a citizen of the French Republic during the Revolution. As a French citizen, Napoleon was able to continue his studies in the famous *École Militaire* in Paris. With the outbreak of Revolution in 1789, Napoleon was about to start his military career. During the royalist revolt of 1795 he was an artillery officer in the Republican army. In 1796 he was appointed General in charge of the army campaigning in Italy and in 1798 he was given the task to conquer Egypt for France.

1799 marked the year of Napoleon's rise to political power. He planned the overthrow of the Directory and made himself First Consul, the first step towards declaring himself Emperor in 1804. His ambition however did not stop there. He planned the invasion of Britain in 1805 while continuing to expand French conquests and influence in Europe. By 1807 he had defeated Austria and Prussia and made an alliance with Russia.

But from then onwards, he started making a number of fatal mistakes and military blunders that were to bring about his downfall: the Continental Blockade against Britain, the invasion of Spain in 1808 which became known as the 'Spanish Ulcer'; and the invasion of Russia in 1812. All these forced France to fight wars on more than one front. The Russian Campaign and the loss of the Grand Army of 600,000 soldiers left France without a standing army. In 1813 Austria, Prussia and Russia joined forces and invaded France, forcing Napoleon to abdicate and retire to the island of Elba while keeping the title of 'Emperor'.

In 1815 he escaped from Elba and was welcomed back as Emperor in Paris. But his new Hundred Days in power ended tragically with his final defeat at Waterloo and his exile to the remote island of St Elena in the Atlantic Ocean. There he spent his last six years of his life dictating his memoirs while he was heavily guarded by the British fleet to make sure he does not escape and return to France. He died of stomach cancer at the age of 51.

**Further reading:**

- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Napoleon>
- <https://www.historyextra.com/period/georgian/napoleon-bonaparte-facts-death-life-exile-elba-military-battle-waterloo-childhood-france/>
- [https://www.ducksters.com/biography/world\\_leaders/napoleon\\_bonaparte.php](https://www.ducksters.com/biography/world_leaders/napoleon_bonaparte.php)

## Questions

1. How did Napoleon become a subject of the King of France?
2. How did Napoleon benefit from his newly acquired French citizenship?
3. What career opportunity did the Revolution of 1789 give to Napoleon?
4. Identify FOUR key dates and events in his rise to power in France.
5. Identify THREE key dates and events that marked the beginning of his downfall.
6. Napoleon once said about himself that he was 'the child of the Revolution'. What did he mean by this statement?
7. Mention THREE positive attributes about his character and personality.
8. Mention THREE negative attributes about his character and personality.