

Europeana Learning Scenario

Title

Napoleon: History, Power, and Humanity

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Abstract

How should we understand Napoleon Bonaparte? His rise as emperor was an outcome of the French Revolution. He claimed to embody the ideals of the Revolution and yet he spent his energies trying to extend his rule in Europe and beyond. While Napoleon is often depicted as a figure of power, history also teaches us about his human desires, ambitions, limits, and ultimate fate. This learning scenario lets students explore different (and perhaps conflicting) understandings and representations of Napoleon. They will be given the time to discover images of Napoleon and to decide which ones connect Napoleon with ideas of power and which ones show aspects of his humanity.

Keywords

Napoleon, History, Power, Humanity, Politics, Media literacy

Table of summary

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Subject	History, Political Science, Philosophy, Ethics
Topic	History: French Revolution, Napoleon, The Napoleonic Wars Political Philosophy/Ethics/Political Science: Distribution of and justification for power; ambition; human tendencies and limitations
Age of students	14-15
Preparation time	120 minutes
Teaching time	90 minutes
Online teaching material	The teacher can make use of the following resources in her/his lesson preparation. The same resources can also be shared with students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History.com on Napoleon • BBC.com on Napoleon Bonaparte • YouTube (TedEd videos): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “What Caused the French Revolution?” ○ “History vs. Napoleon Bonaparte”



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams: a Microsoft application that allows the easy distribution of class resources and online posting of assignments, as well as submission of student work and discussion.
Offline teaching material	Paper and pen (for those who may want to take preliminary notes manually)
Europeana resources used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Bellenblazende Napoleon, 1813” Autant en emporte le vent. (“Napoleon Blowing Bubbles”, 1813). n.a. 1813-1814. Credits: Rijksmuseum; collection: Frederik Muller Historieplaten. License: PD. • Possibly all the results of a search on <i>Europeana.eu</i> using the keyword “Napoleon”, with the following filters: ITEMS: All items MEDIA: images FORMAT: JPEG CAN I USE IT?: Free re-use LANGUAGE: English Search results for "Napoleon"

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Integration into the curriculum

In addition to the consideration of the consequences of the French Revolution in upper secondary education (ages 14-15) or Grade 10 History, this lesson can also be integrated with discussions of political power in Political Science, Ethics, and (Political) Philosophy.

Aim of the lesson

At the end of this lesson, History students would be able to

- formulate their own approach to a historical question
- critically and creatively engage with historical sources
- synthesize secondhand historical knowledge with the experience of studying sources

On the other hand, Ethics, Philosophy, and Political Science students would be able to

- see more clearly the connection between the exercise of power and fallible decision-making
- appreciate an answer to questions of the distribution and justification of political power

Trends

- Snack Learning: small and attractive bits of learning rather than prolonged forms of study
- Collaborative Learning: a strong focus on group work
- Visual Search & Learning: images and multimedia are more powerful than verbal stimuli
- BYOD: Students bring their own mobile devices to the classroom
- Open Source Learning: teachers copy, share, adapt, and reuse free educational materials

21st century skills

- Collaboration and communication – by working in pairs or groups, choosing, and analysing images together
- Digital literacy – by using their devices and digital tools; by learning how to properly cite sources
- Critical thinking – by evaluating the content of a source and formulating a likely interpretation

Activities

Name of activity	Procedure	Time
Introduction	The teacher introduces the topic for the day, enumerates the aims of the lesson, and the learning outcomes the students can expect.	5'
Video viewing	The students watch the short TedEd video " History vs. Napoleon " with the question " <i>Was Napoleon a Force of Good or Evil?</i> " in mind.	5'
Short class discussion	The teacher asks the class: " <i>What reasons were laid out in the video for a positive answer to the question and what arguments against?</i> " Students recall and relate briefly statements and reasons mentioned in the video.	5'
Presentation	Using either a PPT or a Word document projected through a beamer (alternatively, a quick summary written manually on the board would also suffice), the teacher will outline some of the decisions made by Napoleon, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Concordat with the Catholic Church, • the establishment of schools, • the writing and implementation of the Napoleonic code, • the restoration of slavery, • acts of diplomacy and war, etc. <p>Students can also ask questions, which the entire class can address.</p>	15'

Name of activity	Procedure	Time
Presentation of the research and analysis task (Part I)	<p>Then the research and analysis exercise will be explained.</p> <p>First, <i>Europeana.eu</i> will be introduced. The students will be encouraged to visit the website on their devices at that same moment.</p> <p>The teacher will illustrate how to use the database by entering “Napoleon” as a search word and adding filters, such as “images” for Media and “Dutch;Flemish” for Language. The teacher will then choose and show the image entitled “Bellenbalzende Napoleon” (or “Napoleon Blowing Bubbles” in English).</p> <p>The students will then be asked to (a) briefly describe the contents of the image, as well as (b) offer one or two possible interpretations.</p>	15’
Presentation of the research and analysis task (Part II)	<p>The teacher will ask a student to give a recapitulation of all the preceding activities done in class.</p> <p>Then we take the second step: the teacher will give the following instructions:</p> <p>(a) Students need to find a partner to form a pair.</p> <p>(b) They will then return to <i>Europeana.eu</i> to attempt a search using the keyword “Napoleon”. They need to apply these filters in their search:</p> <p>ITEMS: All items MEDIA: images FORMAT: JPEG CAN I USE IT?: Free re-use LANGUAGE: English</p> <p>(c) Each pair needs to choose two images from the search results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one that suggests a connection between Napoleon and power; • another that shows an aspect of Napoleon’s humanity. 	5’ 5’
Pair work (mini research)	Students in each pair search independently on their devices for images following the given instructions.	10’
Pair work (writing)	<p>Working together and using their devices, the students will then create a Word document that (a) presents their two chosen images and which (b) gives an explanation (minimum 4 sentences per item) for their choice.</p> <p>To be able to do the latter, the students need to answer the questions, “<i>How does this image connect Napoleon to power?</i>” and “<i>How does this image show a link between Napoleon and aspects of humanity?</i>”</p> <p>The document also needs to include the following information relating to the selected sources (images) rendered in this format:</p>	25’

Name of activity	Procedure	Time
	<p>“Title of work/source”. Type (of work/source) by First Name Initial. Last Name. Credits: Name of collection/Publishing institution. License: type.</p> <p>For example: “A young girl and her grandfather sit at the top of a hill which looks back over St Paul's cathedral”. Lithograph by J. Barnard. Credits: Welcome collection. Licence: CC BY.</p> <p>The Word document should be saved online (for instance, on Teams>Assignments) with the name of the course and the last names of the students in the filename and within the document itself.</p>	

Assessment

The document submitted by each pair of students will be assessed in terms of

- Correct citation of sources 2 points
- Integration of knowledge from class (including readings) and source evaluation 2 points
- Argumentation 4 points
- Clarity 1 point
- Completion of feedback section 1 point

***** AFTER IMPLEMENTATION *****

Student feedback

Students will be asked to include their feedback on the task in the Word document that they are expected to submit. Feedback will take the form of answers to the following questions:

- (a) What difficulties did you encounter in completing the research and analysis tasks?
- (b) Is this exercise helpful in deepening your understanding of Napoleon and/or the aftereffects of the French Revolution? Explain your answer in at least one sentence.

Teacher's remarks

I implemented this LS right after we concluded our discussion of the Age of Napoleon, which I thought was an ideal moment given the requirements of the LS. For the most part, the students understood what was being asked of them and they jumped right into the task. Making the PowerPoint with the instructions and examples, the links to Europeana.eu website, and all other relevant information available in the Assignments section of Microsoft Teams facilitated the completion of this LS.

From the student feedback, it is clear that the participants appreciated that they were given the initiative, as well as some degree of freedom in choosing images. However, a number of them reported that the task of finding suitable images took up most of their time. Except for a few students, most were able to replicate the prescribed citation format.

An aspect of this exercise that needs to be emphasized is the requirement that the students integrate the knowledge they acquired through class and their discussion of their selected images. This is quite demanding as they need to review past lessons, describe the contents of the images, and answer the questions as to how the sources link Napoleon with power and humanity. In response to the second student-feedback question (see above), many students reported that completing the exercise confirmed what they had already learned about the French Revolution and the figure of Napoleon.

About the Europeana DSI-4 project

[Europeana](#) is Europe's digital platform for cultural heritage, providing free online access to over 53 million digitised items drawn from Europe's museums, archives, libraries and galleries. The Europeana DSI-4 project continues the work of the previous three Europeana Digital Service Infrastructures (DSIs). It is the fourth iteration with a proven record of accomplishment in creating access, interoperability, visibility and use of European cultural heritage in the five target markets outlined: European Citizens, Education, Research, Creative Industries and Cultural Heritage Institutions.

[European Schoolnet](#) (EUN) is the network of 34 European Ministries of Education, based in Brussels. As a not-for-profit organisation, EUN aims to bring innovation in teaching and learning to its key stakeholders: Ministries of Education, schools, teachers, researchers, and industry partners. European Schoolnet's task in the Europeana DSI-4 project is to continue and expand the Europeana Education Community.