

Napoleon Bonaparte — The French Emperor

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Napoleon Bonaparte (August 1769–May 1821) was a French military and political leader who rose to prominence during the latter stages of the **French Revolution** and the associated wars in Europe.



Napoleon's father,
Carlo Buonaparte

Napoleon was born on the island of **Corsica** in the Mediterranean Sea. He rapidly rose through the military ranks during the **French Revolution** (1789–99). His father, Carlo Buonaparte, was a lawyer and his mother was Letizia Romalino Buonaparte. Although his parents were members of the minor Corsican nobility, the family was not much wealthy.



Napoleon Bonaparte

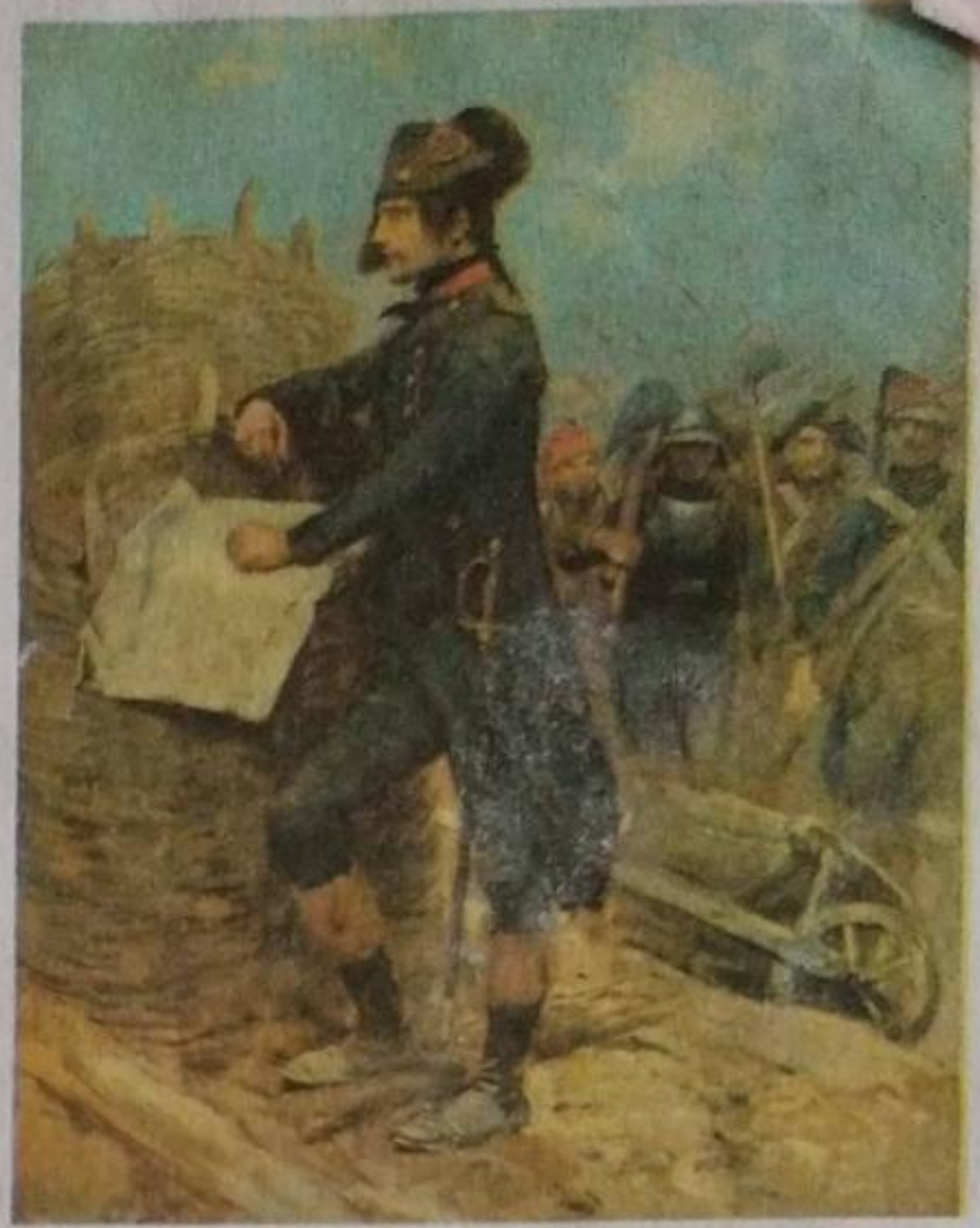
Early Life

As a boy, Napoleon attended school in mainland France where he learned the French language and went on to graduate from a French military academy. He then became a Second Lieutenant in an artillery regiment of the French army. The French Revolution began in 1789 and within 3 years revolutionaries had overthrown the monarchy and proclaimed a **Republic** in France.

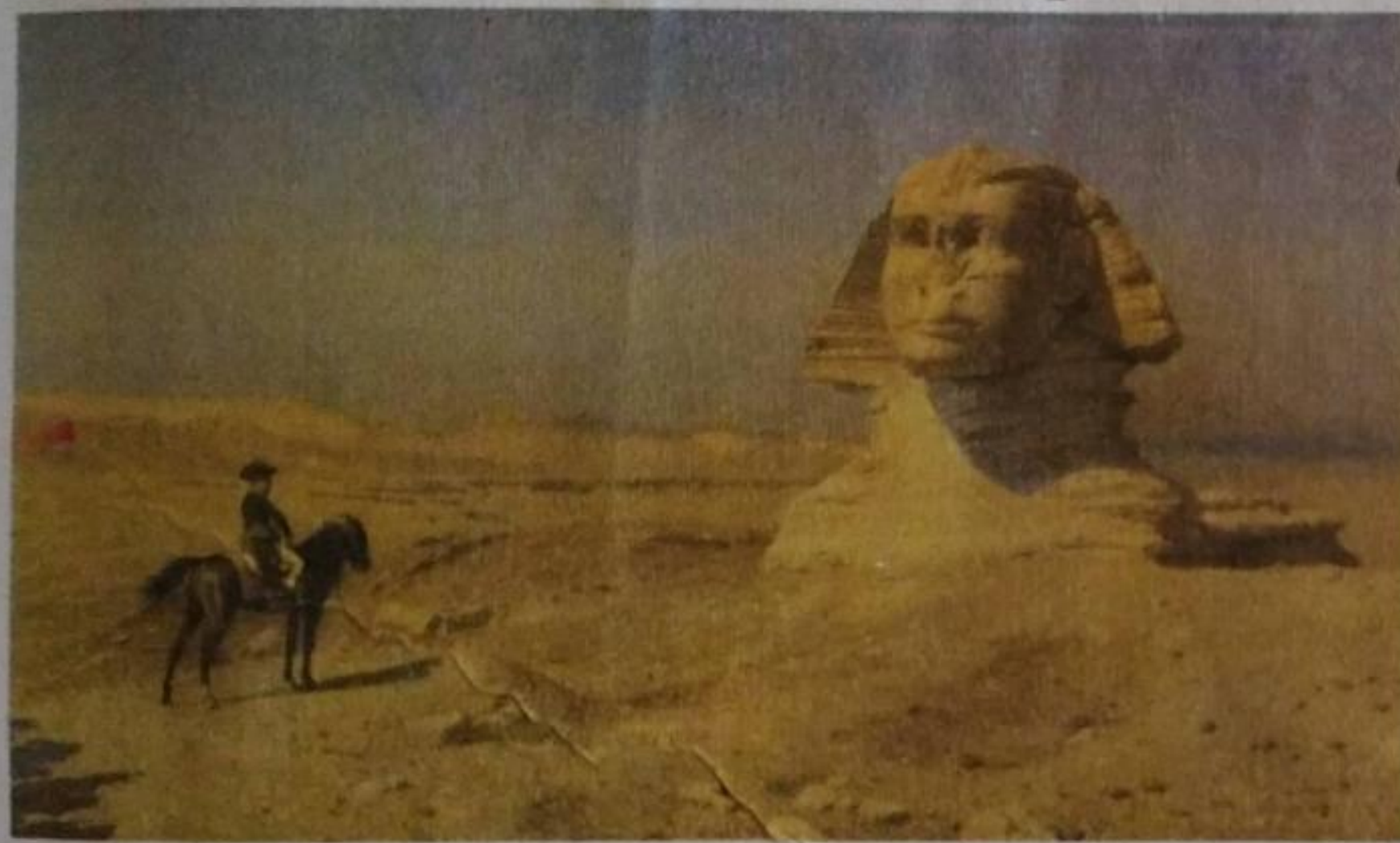
Napoleon's Rise to Power

Since 1792, the revolutionary governments of France had been engaged in military conflicts with various European nations. Napoleon led the French army that defeated the larger armies of Austria in a series of battles in Italy in 1797. France and Austria signed the *Treaty of Campo Formio*, where France gained a number of territories.

The following year, the **Directory**, a Group of Five, that had governed France since 1795, offered to let Napoleon lead the invasion of **England**. Napoleon suggested that the naval forces of France were not yet ready to fight against the superior British navy. Instead, he proposed the invasion of Egypt, where he planned (to wipe out British trade with India)



General Bonaparte at the siege of Toulon



Napoleon at the Sphinx, Egypt

The Coup of 18 Brumaire

In November 1799, in an event known as the *Coup of 18 Brumaire*, Napoleon was part of a group that successfully *overthrew* the French *Directory*. (The Directory was replaced with a *three-member consulate* and Napoleon became the **First Consul**), making him France's leading political figure. In June 1800, at the Battle of Marengo, Napoleon's forces defeated Austria and drove them out of Italy. This victory helped Napoleon in consolidating his position as the First Consul.

² Napoleon won over the Egyptian military rulers—the Mamluks at ¹ the **Battle of the Pyramids** in July 1798.

In early 1799, Napoleon's army invaded **Syria**, which ended with the failure to occupy Acre (now in Israel). The political situation in France became uncertain, this led Napoleon to abandon his campaign in Egypt and returned to France.



The Coup of 18 Brumaire

In addition, with the Treaty of Amiens of 1802, the British were forced to make peace with the French.

Napoleon worked to restore stability in France. *How did Napoleon restore order in post-revolutionary France?*

- ✓ ④ Centralised the government
- ✓ Introduced reforms in banking and education
- ✓ Supported study of science and arts
- ✓ Ended the conflict between the Pope and the State
- ✓ Instituted *Napoleonic Code*, which reformed the French legal system and is the foundation of French civil law

In 1802, a constitutional amendment made Napoleon the **First Consul for life**. Two years later, in 1804 he crowned himself as the *Emperor of France* in a lavish ceremony at the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris. ✓ 2025



Napoleon crossing the Alps on the back of Marengo



NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE - THE FRENCH EMPEROR

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ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. When was Napoleon Bonaparte born? Where was he born?
2. How did he rise through the military ranks? Who were his parents? Which nobility did his parents belong to?
3. In which rank did Napoleon start his career from?
4. When did the French Revolution begin? What did the revolutionaries proclaim within 3 years of the Revolution?
5. Name the treaty that was signed between France and Austria?
6. Who offered Napoleon to lead the invasion in England? What was Napoleon's opinion after this offer? What did Napoleon propose after it?
7. Write down the importance of the following years -
a) 1798 b) 1799 (July) c) 1799 (November)
d) 1800 e) 1802
8. Write down any four points on how Napoleon restored order in post-Revolutionary France?
9. When did Napoleon become the first consul for life? When did Napoleon crown himself as the Emperor of France? Where did the ceremony take place?