



Teacher's Guide

Napoleon at Waterloo: The Battle for Europe

Grade Levels:

7-12

Subject Areas:

Social Studies

World History

World Geography & Cultures

Synopsis:

The Battle of Waterloo is re-enacted with thousands of troops and historically accurate portrayals of the Duke of Wellington and Napoleon Bonaparte and their respective military tactics. After Napoleon escapes from Elba, Marshal Ney and French troops are ordered to re-capture the Little Emperor. Instead, Napoleon persuades them to join him in conquering all of Europe. As Napoleon and his troops advance on Brussels, war is declared on Napoleon himself. The episode provides a chronological reenactment of the marshaling of British and Prussian troops, Napoleon's successful offensive tactic of "divide and conquer" and the ensuing battle at Waterloo. There Napoleon makes the uncharacteristic decision not to attack immediately and is ultimately defeated by the combined Prussian and British forces. The back and forth campaigns of this battle are re-enacted in detail. Napoleon is fully disgraced, orders his retreating troops to be fired upon by his own artillery, and eventually surrenders and is exiled. The defensive success of the Duke of Wellington saves Europe from French dominance and guarantees the Duke's eventual appointment as British Prime Minister.

Learning Objectives: Students will:

- Compare and contrast the offensive and defensive military tactics used by Napoleon and the Duke of Wellington.
- Speculate on Napoleon's reasons for not mounting his typical offense.
- Appreciate the wisdom of the Duke of Wellington's military decisions.
- Explain why this battle was so important in 19th Century European history.

Vocabulary:

Allied army, divide and conquer, veterans, cavalry, artillery, salvo, bayonets, infantry

Pre-Viewing Discussion:

Who was Napoleon? Why is he so famous?

Can anyone describe Napoleon's stature and appearance? Why was the size of the "little Emperor" of little concern to the soldiers who served under him? How was he viewed by his troops?

Where did Napoleon die? Why was he sent into exile? Why was he disgraced?

What were Napoleon's original plans for France and the French army?

Post-Viewing Discussion:

How did Napoleon's exile in Elba or his failing health affect his military tactics at the Battle of Waterloo? What military tactic, in particular, had made him so successful in the past?

How did Napoleon's characteristic military tactics contrast with those of the Duke of Wellington?

What decision did Napoleon make that resulted in victory over the Prussian army?

How was he ultimately defeated at the Battle of Waterloo? What act most revealed that Napoleon had lost his conquering spirit?

How did the outcome of the Battle of Waterloo affect 19th Century European history?

Further Activities:

Further investigate Napoleon's battle successes and the reasons for his popularity as a military leader.

Find out how the Duke of Wellington gained his military expertise.

Further investigate the life of Count Gebhard von Blücher to determine how he was able to provide skilled leadership to the Prussian troops.

Compare French and British government leadership at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century.

Research whether the program's narration: "Britain, Austria, Russia declared war not on a state, not on France . . . they declared war on an individual: Napoleon," is literally true. Can you find other instances where the main cause seems to be a leader's actions? If wars are started primarily because of a leader's actions, what problems can this create for all sides?

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