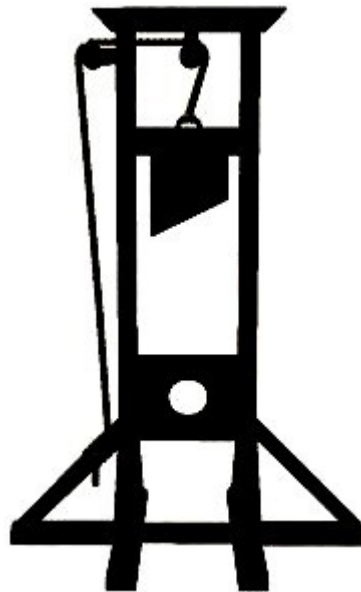


YEAR 5: THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND NAPOLEON (5 lessons)



Contents Include:

The French Revolution
The Rise of Napoleon
The Battle of Trafalgar
The Battle of Waterloo

Suggested Teacher Resources:

- *A Little History of the World* by Ernst Gombrich (chapters 34 and 35).
- *Great Tales from English History* by Robert Lacey (pages 350-353, and 358-361).
- *The Young Oxford History of Britain & Ireland*, pages 277-285.
- Scenes from the films *Waterloo* (1970), the TV mini-series *Napoleon* (2002) and *La Révolution Française* (1989).

Lesson 1. Life in France before the Revolution

In 1789, France was one of the wealthiest and most powerful nations in the world. However, the structure of French society was essentially unchanged since the medieval period. The King, Louis XVI, was an absolute monarch, with no permanent Parliament. The aristocracy and the clergy were extremely rich, but paid no taxes. The taxes were paid by the ordinary people, many of them poor peasants doing backbreaking labour. After the American War of Independence, France sank deeply into debt, so with bankruptcy nearing and a bad harvest leading to food shortages, people started to demand change.

See page 136 of *What Your Year 5 Child Needs to Know*.

Learning Objective	Core Knowledge	Activities for Learning	Related Vocabulary	Assessment Questions
<p>To know what life was like in France before 1789, and why that made Revolution likely.</p>	<p>French society before 1789 was very unfair. The King had absolute power, and did not share power with Parliament.</p> <p>French society was structured into the aristocracy, the clergy and the rest (known as the 'Third Estate'). The normal people did most of the work and paid all of the tax, whilst the aristocracy grew immensely rich.</p> <p>In 1789, state bankruptcy and a poor harvest made people even more angry...</p>	<p>Many concepts (absolute monarchy, aristocracy, clergy, feudal society) will be familiar from studying medieval England in Years 2 and 3, but may need to be revisited.</p> <p>Pupils create a living diagram of French society, by taking on different roles and organising themselves in a 'pyramid' (resource 1). Pupils could then read out relevant statements about their position in society. Once this has been completed, the famous cartoon of the three 'estates', see here, should be studied to solidify pupil understanding (resource 2).</p> <p>This is a very lavish BBC documentary about Louis XVI and Versailles. This is a classic image of a French aristocrat.</p>	<p>feudal absolute monarch aristocracy clergy peasant absolutist</p>	<p><i>What was life like for an aristocrat/bishop/peasant in France before 1789?</i></p> <p><i>Who had all of the power in France?</i></p> <p><i>Who had to pay all of the taxes?</i></p> <p><i>Why did people dislike the structure of society in France before 1789?</i></p>

1. French Society in 1789

The King

- Ruled all of France.
- Lived in the Palace of Versailles.
- Had absolute power.
- Chosen by God.

The Clergy (1st Estate)

- 130,000 in number.
- Lived with a lot of wealth.
- Ran the French Catholic Church, and owned around 15% of the land.
- People had to pay them 10% of all earnings, called a 'tithe'.

The Aristocracy (2nd Estate)

- Around 200,000 in number.
- Owned most of the land in France and did not have to pay tax.
- Extremely wealthy.
- Dominated the top jobs in the army, politics, the clergy.

Everyone else (3rd Estate)

- Around 27 million in number.
- Included everyone from wealthy lawyers and doctors, to very poor farmers and labourers.
- Had to pay almost all of the tax to the aristocracy and the clergy, and had very few rights.
- Around 80% of France's population were peasants, living impoverished, miserable lives.

2. French Society in 1789

'The Third Estate carrying the Clergy and the Nobility on its back', a cartoon from 1789. The text reads, "You should hope that this game will be over soon."

Look at the image [here](#), and see which of the following features you can locate.

A member of the clergy, as can be seen from the crucifix around his neck. He is fat and well dressed, and clearly very wealthy. He has cheques stuffed into his pockets, with one labelled 'pension' (money paid out from the government).

A peasant from the 'Third Estate' carries the aristocracy and the clergy on his back. He is clearly poor, with wooden shoes and ripped socks that do not cover his bare legs. Like many peasants, he is a farmer as can be seen by the hoe he is using as a walking stick.

A member of the nobility. He has colourful expensive clothing, with a hat covered in ostrich feathers. He has a sword, showing the historic right of the French nobility to wear a sword. On it is inscribed 'rougit de sang', meaning 'red from blood'. What could this mean?

The peasants seeds and cabbages are eaten by rodents, but he is too busy holding up the nobility and the clergy to stop them.

The peasant has bills entitled 'taille' in his pockets, which was a French land tax which non-nobles were forced to pay.

The cartoon shows the unfairness of the weakest and poorest in society being made to carry the wealthiest. The caption at the bottom of the cartoon predicts the revolution, stating 'this game will be over soon'.

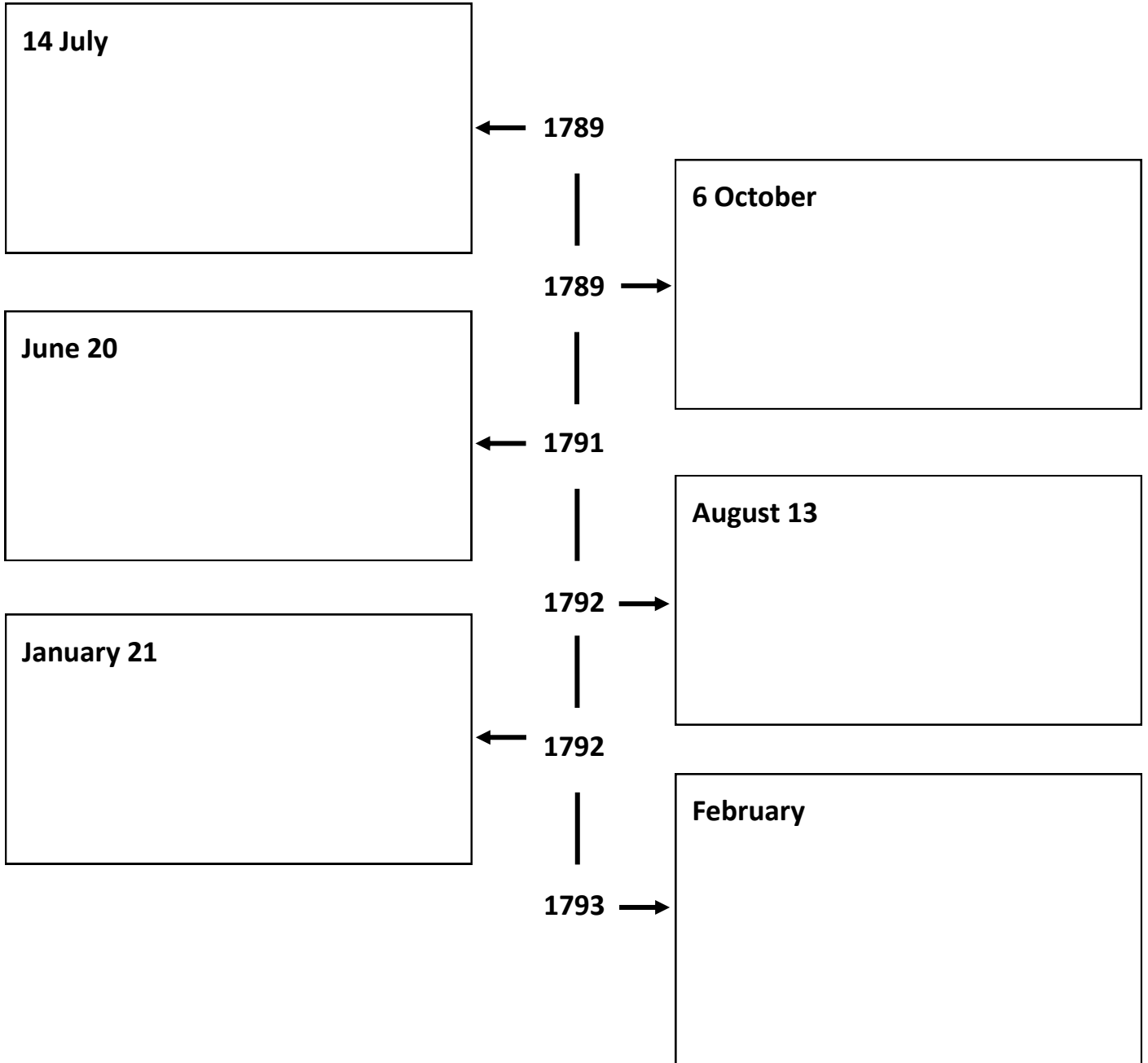
Lesson 2. The French Revolution

The French Revolution was one of the most important events in world history. In 1789, the people of France rose up against Louis XVI, the absolutist King of France. Four years later, Louis XVI and his Queen Marie Antoinette were beheaded. France was declared a Republic, and ideas such as 'liberty', 'equality' and 'rights' were developed. The French people tried to export these ideas to the rest of Europe using force, particularly from 1799 onwards under the military leadership of Napoleon. The French Revolutionary Wars spread across Europe, sucking in Britain and leading to the battles of Trafalgar and Waterloo.

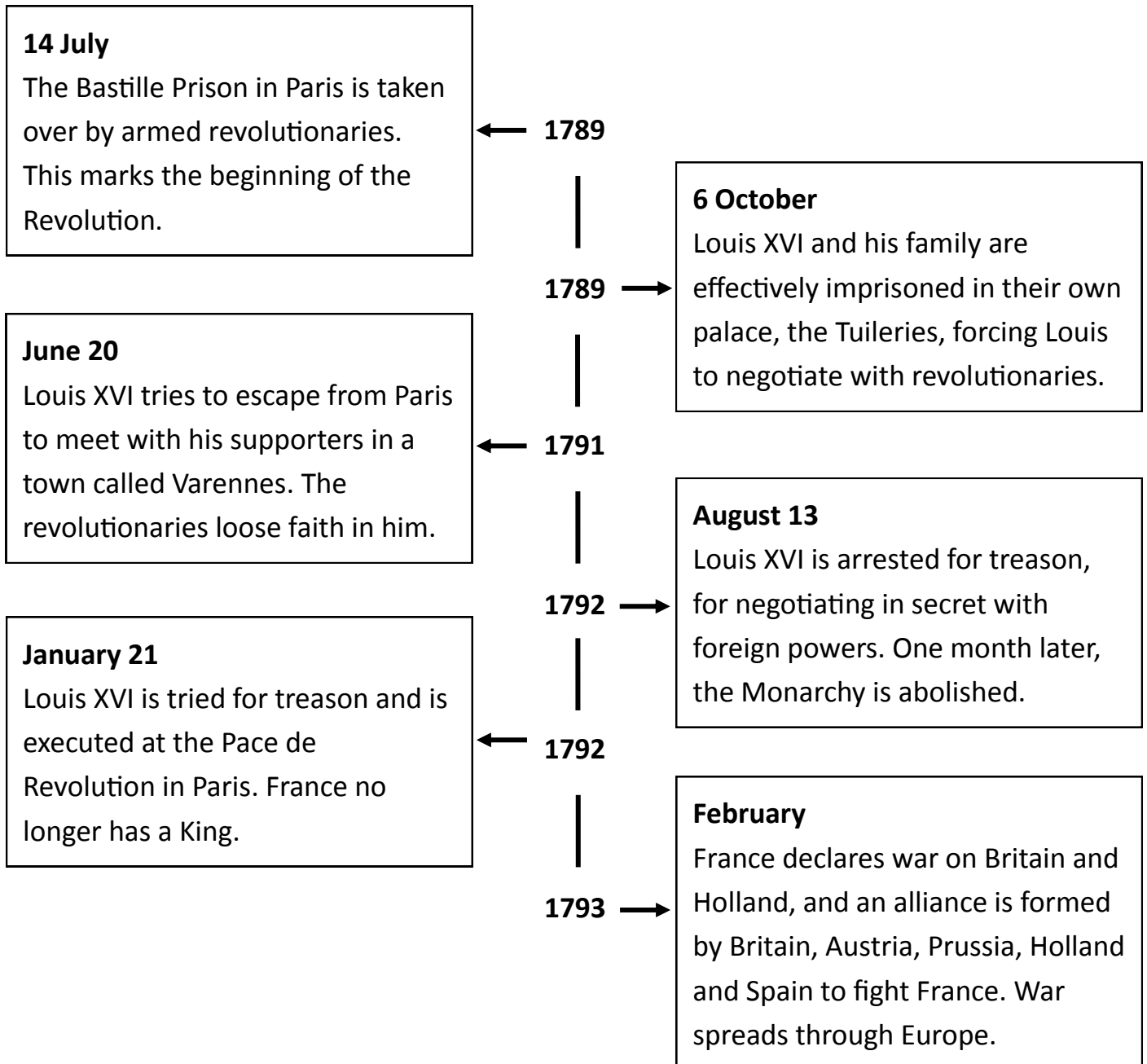
See page 136-137 of *What Your Year 5 Child Needs to Know*.

Learning Objective	Core Knowledge	Activities for Learning	Related Vocabulary	Assessment Questions
<p>To know what happened during the French Revolution.</p>	<p>In 1789, the French people staged a revolution against Louis XVI in order to share power more equally across the country.</p> <p>Louis XVI was an absolutist monarch, much like Charles I before the English Civil War. Like Charles I, he was eventually executed in 1793.</p> <p>The Revolution took place partly because France was bankrupt after fighting the Seven Years War and the American War of Independence, and was therefore taxing its citizens highly.</p>	<p>Complete a timeline of the major events of the French Revolution (resource 3), and study the execution of Louis XVI through a famous depiction of the event (resource 4). View image here.</p> <p>If students have studied the Civil War in Year 4, they could write a comparison between King Charles I and Louis XVI. Did they have similar beliefs? Did they rule in a similar way? Were they killed for similar reasons?</p> <p>This is the Horrible Histories' overview of the French Revolution. This is a moving (and not too gory) dramatization of Louis XVI's execution, although it is in French! This is an amusing introductory video about the French Revolution.</p>	<p>revolution republic Guillotine</p>	<p><i>What sort of King was Louis XVI?</i></p> <p><i>Why did the French people oppose Louis XVI?</i></p> <p><i>Why did the French people kill their King?</i></p>

3. French Revolution Timeline



3. French Revolution Timeline (complete)



4. The Execution of Louis XVI

'Execution of Louis XVI', by Georg Heinrich Sieveking (1793)

Look at the image [here](#), and see which of the following features you can locate.

The execution took place on the main public square in Paris. It had been named after Louis's father, 'Place de Louis XV', but was then renamed 'Place de la Revolution' after 1789. It is now called 'Place de la Concorde'.

Before his execution, Louis was reported to have shouted to the crowd: 'I die innocent of all the crimes laid to my charge; I Pardon those who have occasioned my death; and I pray to God that the blood you are going to shed may never be visited on France.'

Louis XVI is taken to his execution in a green carriage, with his priest and two soldiers. The journey from his prison was accompanied by thousands of soldiers, to prevent anyone from showing support for the King.

Drummers from the National Guard were ordered to play their drums in order to drown out any cries from the crowd in support of the King.

Louis XVI is executed using a Guillotine. The Guillotine was invented during the French Revolution as a quick and convenient way to kill people who opposed the Revolution. It was also seen as 'fair', as everyone was killed in the same way.

Surrounding the execution was the National Guard, an army made up of Paris citizens to keep order. They were there to prevent Royalist disturbances or riots.

Louis XVI was imprisoned in his own palace during the Revolution. He could not come to an agreement with the revolutionaries, and tried to escape from prison in 1791. The following year, he was tried for treason for asking foreign monarchs to invade France and save him. He was sentenced to death, and the execution took place on 10 August 1792.

Lesson 3. The Rise of Napoleon

After the execution of Louis XVI in 1793, France entered a period of instability. There was disagreement over how the Republic should be governed, and France was having to fight wars against much of the rest of Europe to export their revolutionary ideas, and to prevent other monarchies from re-establishing a French monarchy. Within this confusion, a talented young general took power in Paris in 1799 aged only twenty-nine years old. He was named Napoleon Bonaparte, and would rule France until 1815. He modernised France, conquered much of Europe, and is one of the most important figures in world history.

See page 137-138 of *What Your Year 5 Child Needs to Know*.

Learning Objective	Core Knowledge	Activities for Learning	Related Vocabulary	Assessment Questions
<p>To know how Napoleon rose to be one of the greatest figures in world history.</p>	<p>In 1799, Napoleon became the new leader of France, filling the power gap that was left after the death of Louis XVI.</p> <p>Napoleon was an extremely talented General in the French army, who conquered most of Italy aged only 27.</p> <p>In 1804 Napoleon became Emperor of France. He was able to conquer much of Europe, and placed members of his family in control of various countries.</p>	<p>Annotate a map of Europe with all of the most significant moments in the life of Napoleon Bonaparte (resource 5).</p> <p>Compare two different views of Napoleon, one from a British perspective and one from the French perspective (see here and here). There are an enormous number of paintings of Napoleon and the different stages of his reign which can be used in this lesson, see here.</p> <p>This is a brief biography of the life of Napoleon, and this and this are two Horrible Histories profiles. This is a Horrible Histories video of life in the French army.</p>	<p>emperor Napoleon</p>	<p><i>Who was Napoleon?</i></p> <p><i>Why is Napoleon such an important figure in history?</i></p>

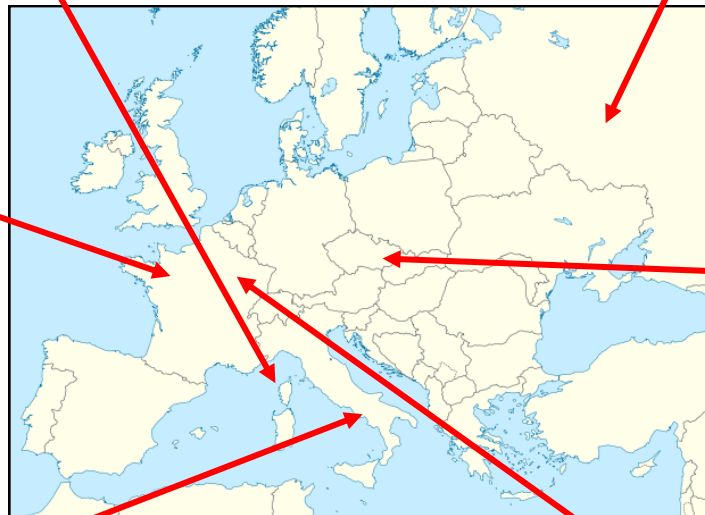
5. Napoleon Bonaparte

1769:

1815:

1812:

1784:



1804 onwards:

1796:

1799:

1799:

5. Napoleon Bonaparte (complete)

1769:

Napoleon is born in Corsica, an Italian island that had recently been taken over by France. Napoleon was teased for the rest of his life for having an Italian accent.

1815:

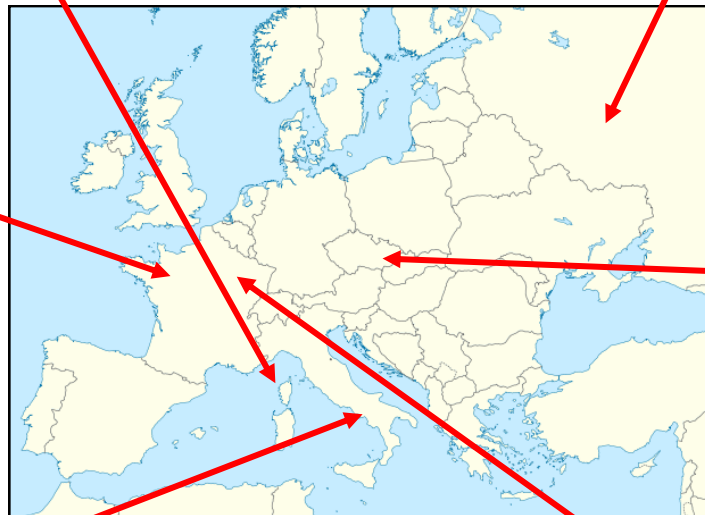
Napoleon loses much of his European Empire, and the British ally with the Dutch and the Prussians for one last Battle at Waterloo. Napoleon is defeated, and sent into exile. He dies alone in exile in 1821.

1812:

Napoleon invades Russia, but it is a colossal failure. His army suffers in the winter, and of an army of 600,000 men, only around 10,000 return alive. Napoleon's power begins to weaken.

1784:

Napoleon leaves Corsica for France, and studies at the Military Academy in Paris. He does not make many friends, but studies hard reading about great military leaders such as Alexander the Great. He joins the French army.



1804 onwards:

Napoleon expands the French Empire with a number of startling military victories. He wins Spain, Italy, Holland and parts of Germany and Austria. In many countries, he makes a close friend or family member ruler. His brother Joseph is made King of Spain, his brother Louis King of Holland.

1796:

Aged only twenty-six, Napoleon is placed in charge of the 30,000 strong Army of Italy. His inspiring leadership wins much of Italy from the Austrians, expanding the French Empire and making Napoleon a national hero.

1799:

Napoleon returns to Paris having been fighting in Egypt, and forces himself into power over France. He is made 'first consul', and modernises French government.

1799:

Napoleon's reforms which provided education and legal rights prove popular with the French people. He is made Emperor of the French in 1804.

Lesson 4. The Battle of Trafalgar

Prior to becoming Emperor, Napoleon had focused on French domestic reform. However, as Emperor his mind turned to conquering Europe and his first target was Great Britain: by 1805, he had assembled a 200,000 strong 'Army of Britain' ready to invade. First, he had to beat the Royal Navy so that the French troops could safely cross the channel. Under the command of Horatio Nelson, the British navy took a pre-emptive strike and found the French navy near a Spanish cape called Trafalgar. The French navy were beaten, Admiral Nelson was killed, and Britain was saved from the threat of a French invasion.

See page 138-139 of *What Your Year 5 Child Needs to Know*.

Learning Objective	Core Knowledge	Activities for Learning	Related Vocabulary	Assessment Questions
<p>To understand the importance of the Battle of Trafalgar in saving the British from a French invasion.</p>	<p>Admiral Nelson's victory at the Battle of Trafalgar prevented Napoleon from invading Great Britain and placing it under French control.</p> <p>In 1805, Napoleon was very close to invading England. To do so, he had to defeat the Royal Navy and gain control of the English Channel.</p> <p>Admiral Nelson masterminded the victory of the Royal Navy at Trafalgar, but died during the conflict.</p>	<p>This lesson should link with the lesson in the 'Birth of the British Empire' unit about life as a seaman in the Royal Navy.</p> <p>There are many famous depictions of Nelson. This one shows the chaos and confusion battle, whilst this fresco idealises Nelson's death (resource 6). The link should be made between this battle and Trafalgar Square in London, which hosts Nelson's Column. Also, Show the class the signal that was flown from the <i>HMS Victory</i> on the morning of the battle, and discuss how naval signals might work.</p> <p>Write a newspaper story about the Battle of Trafalgar. Ensure it explains why the battle is so important for Britain (worksheet 7).</p>	<p>English Channel Admiral</p>	<p><i>What was Napoleon planning in 1805?</i></p> <p><i>Why did Britain win the Battle of Trafalgar?</i></p> <p><i>Why was it such an important victory?</i></p> <p><i>What happened to Admiral Nelson?</i></p>

6. The Death of Nelson

'The Death of Nelson', Daniel Maclise (1864). Painted almost sixty years after the Battle of Trafalgar, this painting sought to romanticise the death of Admiral Nelson.

Look at the image [here](#), and see which of the following features you can locate.

A woman tends a dying sailor. There is one woman known to have taken part in the battle, but she was on the *HMS Defiance*.

In all, 449 British servicemen died at Trafalgar, compared to 4,408 French and Spanish deaths.

A black sailor points towards the sniper on the French ship, the *Redoubtable*. Two African sailors served on the *HMS Victory* as free sailors.

Soldiers from the Army would fight in naval battles, providing musket fire to kill the enemy on the nearby ship. You can just see the French sniper on the *Redoubtable* in the distance.

Nelson is in the centre of the painting, being held by his close friend and Chief of Staff Captain Hardy. They had served together since 1796. Famously, whilst Nelson was dying he requested of his friend 'Kiss me, Hardy'.

Nelson was shot by a French sniper at around one o'clock, and said to Captain Hardy, 'Hardy, I do believe they have done it at last... my backbone is shot through.' Nelson had been hit many times before, having lost his right arm in battle in 1797.

A sailor with a peg leg and a naval tattoo helps a wounded officer.

Lesson 5. The Battle of Waterloo

After the Battle of Trafalgar, the British were spared French rule. However, most of western Europe was not. In a series of military victories, Napoleon spread his power across Italy, Spain, Holland, Poland and Germany. After his catastrophic loss in Russia in 1812, Napoleon's power began to fade, and he was defeated and exiled in 1814. Only a year later, he escaped from exile and returned as French Emperor. An army led by the British and allied with Holland and Prussia met Napoleon's French army at Waterloo, where he was defeated. Napoleon was exiled to St Helena, one of the most remote islands in the world.

See page 139-140 of *What Your Year 5 Child Needs to Know*.

Learning Objective	Core Knowledge	Activities for Learning	Related Vocabulary	Assessment Questions
<p>To understand the significance of the Allied victory in the Battle of Waterloo.</p>	<p>The Battle of Waterloo was Napoleon's final attempt to keep control of France, but he was defeated by a combined British, German and Dutch army led by General Wellington.</p> <p>In 1815, Napoleon had returned from exile and took command of France once again.</p> <p>An army of European nations allied to defeat him, and Napoleon was sent to live the rest of his life in exile on an island in the Atlantic Ocean called St Helena.</p>	<p>Show clips from the epic Waterloo (1970), in particular to illustrate the tactics of a battle. This is Horrible Histories contribution.</p> <p>Write a newspaper story about the Battle of Trafalgar. Ensure it explains why the battle is so important for Britain (resource 8). Read Comte de Las Cases' account of Napoleon on Saint Helena. Write a diary entry imagining that you are Napoleon complaining of your exile, and the life to which you have been relegated (resource 9). See also this famous painting of Napoleon imprisoned on St Helena.</p> <p>Pupils complete a piece of extended writing about the Battle of Trafalgar and The Battle of Waterloo. Which was more significant?</p>	<p>alliance</p> <p>exile</p> <p>Battle of Waterloo</p> <p>General Wellington</p> <p>St Helena</p>	<p><i>What did Napoleon do in 1815?</i></p> <p><i>Who allied against Napoleon?</i></p> <p><i>How did Wellington win the Battle of Waterloo?</i></p> <p><i>Why was it such an important victory?</i></p>

9. Napoleon in Exile

This is the account of Comte de Las Cases, who visited Napoleon whilst he was imprisoned by the British on a barren, windswept island in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, called Saint Helena.

The Emperor Napoleon, who lately possessed such boundless power and disposed of so many crowns, now occupies a wretched hovel, a few feet square, which is perched upon a rock, unprovided with furniture, and without either shutters or curtains to the windows. This place must serve him for bedchamber, dressing room, dining room, study, and sitting room; and he is obliged to go out when it is necessary to have this one apartment cleaned. His meals, consisting of a few wretched dishes, are brought to him from a distance, as though he were a criminal in a dungeon. He is absolutely in want of the necessaries of life: the bread and wine are not only not such as he has been accustomed to, but are so bad that we loathe to touch them; water, coffee, butter, oil, and other articles are either not to be procured or are scarcely fit for use...

We were all assembled around the emperor, and he was recapitulating these facts with warmth:

"For what infamous treatment are we reserved!" he exclaimed. This is the anguish of death. To injustice and violence they now add insult and protracted torment. If I were

so hateful to them, why did they not get rid of me? A few musket balls in my heart or my head would have done the business, and there would at least have been some energy in the crime. Were it not for you, and above all for your wives, I would receive nothing from them but the pay of a private soldier. How can the monarchs of Europe permit the sacred character of sovereignty to be violated in my person? Do they not see that they are, with their own hands, working their own destruction at St. Helena?

"I entered their capitals victorious and, had I cherished such sentiments, what would have become of them? They styled me their brother, and I had become so by the choice of the people, the sanction of victory, the character of religion, and the alliances of their policy and their blood. Do they imagine that the good sense of nations is blind to their conduct? And what do they expect from it? At all events, make your complaints, gentlemen; let indignant Europe hear them. Complaints from me would be beneath my dignity and character; I must either command or be silent."