

Name: _____ Seat _____ Period _____ Date: _____

Whitney High School
AP European History

Lesson 31-a • Handout 50-a
S. Rosenberg

Napoleon: The Legacy of the Legend

Napoleon: Success or Failure

Part A

Directions: Break up into groups of 3 to 4 people. Together, determine which of the following activities of Napoleon were successes and which were failures. Use your Palmer and / or McKay text as well as the Internet to complete this. Explain the reasons for your choices in the box.

Activity	Success or Failure	Reasons
Creation of republics		
Continental System		
Concordat of 1801		

Abolition of serfdom and feudalism		
Invasion of Russia		
Code Napoleon		
Nationalism		
Economic stimulation		

Manipulation of law and religion		
Great military conquests		
One million French casualties		
Treaty of Tilsit		
Egyptian campaign		

Centralized authority		
Political repression		
Financial exploitation of conquered lands		
Religious toleration		
Waterloo		

Public works		
Public education system		
Abolition of the Holy Roman Empire		
Battle of Trafalgar		

Part B:

Directions: Read the following background on the authors and their evaluations of Napoleon. Then answer the questions that follow in preparation for class discussion on a separate sheet of lined paper. Please do this work separately and not with your group.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe on Napoleon

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) was a leading German author and polymath whose collected works fill more than 140 volumes. He searched for the mysteries of nature and human experience in his lyrics and verse and considered the political order in *The Sorrows of the Young Werther* and *Faust*. In *Werther*, Goethe explained that despair was the only reaction one could have in the face of the Old Order, while in *Faust* he preserved the Romantic notion of the pursuit of supernatural power. Like his fellow Romantics, he viewed the French Revolution and the rise of Napoleon as the dawn of a new and heroic epoch that would usher in a new world.

Now Napoleon—there was a fellow I Always enlightened by reason, always clear and decisive, and gifted at every moment with enough energy to translate into action whatever he recognized as being advantageous or necessary. His life was the stride of a demigod from battle to battle and from victory to victory ... [It could ... be said that he was in a permanent state of enlightenment, which is why his fate was more brilliant than the world has ever seen or is likely to see after him.

John Adams on Napoleon

John Adams (1735-1826), a well-read teacher and lawyer, championed American independence when British measures infringed on colonial liberties and self-government. He wrote most of the Massachusetts State Constitution and its Bill of Rights, and served as Federalist President of the United States during the stormy years of trouble with France in the late 1790s. Adams distrusted popular government and strove to create and maintain dignity, ritual, and authority in his administration. Despite the counsel from many in his party to pursue war with France after the XYZ affair, Adams chose an independent course of military preparedness and diplomatic negotiations. His preference for neutrality over war and military conquest precipitated a split in his party and cost him his chance for a second term. Adams later considered his success in avoiding war with France the major accomplishment of his presidency.

What a mighty bubble! What a tremendous Waterspout has [Napoleon] been according to his Life, written by himself? He says he was the Creature of the Principles and manners of the Age. By which no doubt he means the Age of Reason. . . . I believe him. A Whirlwind raised him and a Whirlwind blowed him a way to St. Helena. He is very confident that the Age of Reason is not past; and so am I; but I hope that Reason will never again rashly and hastily create such Creatures as him. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, and Humanity will never again, I hope, blindly surrender themselves to an unbounded Ambition for national Conquests, nor implicitly commit themselves to the custody and Guardianship of Arms and Heroes. If they do, they will again end in St. Helena ... 2

1. Explain how each individual's assessment of Napoleon reflects his (Goethe's or Adams's) major interests or concerns.
2. Napoleon has been described as a hero, an opportunist, a patriot, or a revolutionary. Based on your evidence, in which category would you place him? Justify your answer.
3. Our concerns and interests tend to shape our view of history. People who are fascinated by military tactics will focus on Napoleon's battles and strategies, points which would be of little interest to a person whose major concerns took a humanitarian direction. Which of the following perspectives best represents your own concerns and interests: politics, the military, social justice, or economics?
4. What aspects of Napoleon's career would each of these four perspectives-politics, the military, social justice, and economics-highlight?