The Rise of Napoleon and the Napoleonic Wars

Chapter 9 Section 3
I. The Rise of Napoleon

A. Napoleon was born in 1769 in Corsica.
   1. His family was Italian and not wealthy.
   2. Napoleon won a scholarship to a French military school.

B. When Napoleon completed his studies, he became a lieutenant in the French army.
   1. He spoke with an Italian accent and was not popular with his fellow officers.
C. Napoleon rose quickly through the ranks.

1. In 1792 he became a captain. Two years later, the Committee of Public Safety made him a brigadier general.

2. In 1796 he became commander of the French armies in Italy.
   a. He won a series of battles with speed, surprise, and decisive action.
   b. Throughout the Italian campaigns, Napoleon's energy and initiative earned him the devotion of his troops.
3. In 1797 he returned to France as a hero.
   a. He was given command of an army in training to invade Britain, but he knew the French could not carry out that invasion.
   b. Napoleon suggested striking indirectly at Britain by taking Egypt.

D. Egypt lay on the route to India, one of Britain's most important colonies.

1. The British had defeated the French naval forces supporting Napoleon's army in Egypt.
   a. Seeing certain defeat, Napoleon abandoned his army and returned to Paris.
E. In Paris, Napoleon took part in the coup d'état of 1799 that setup the consulate.

1. Napoleon held absolute power as first consul.
   a. In 1802 Napoleon was made consul for life. Two years later, he crowned himself Emperor Napoleon I.
F. One of Napoleon’s first moves at home was to establish peace with the Catholic Church.

1. He believed in reason and felt that religion was at most a social convenience.
   
a. Since most of France was Catholic, he thought it was a good idea to mend relations with the Church.

2. In 1801 Napoleon came to an agreement with the pope, which recognized Catholicism in France.
   
a. In return, the pope would not ask for the return of the church lands seized in the revolution.
G. Napoleon's most famous domestic achievement was to codify the laws.

1. Before the revolution, France had almost 300 different legal systems.

2. Seven law codes were created, but the most important was the Civil Code, or Napoleonic Code.
   a. It preserved many of the principles that the revolutionaries had fought for.

3. For women and children, the Civil Code was a step back.
   a. During the radical stage of the revolution, new laws had made divorce easier and allowed children, even daughters, to inherit property.
   b. The Civil Code undid these laws. Women were now "less equal than men."
H. Early on, Napoleon’s regime showed that it did not care about rank or birth.
   1. Public officials and military officers alike were promoted based on their ability.
I. Napoleon did keep some major reforms of the French Revolution.
   1. Under the Civil Code, all citizens were equal before the law.
J. Napoleon also destroyed some revolutionary ideals.
   1. Napoleon shut down 60 of France's 73 newspapers and banned books.
   2. He insisted that all manuscripts be subjected to government scrutiny before they were published.
      a. Even the mail was opened by government police.
Anne-Louise Germaine de Staël daughter of Jacques Necker, the finance minister for Louis XVI.
I. Napoleon’s Empire

A. When Napoleon became consul in 1799, France was at war with a European coalition of Russia, Great Britain, and Austria.

1. Napoleon realized the need for a pause in the war.
2. War with Britain broke out again in 1803.
   a. Austria, Russia, Sweden, and Prussia joined the conflict.
3. Napoleon's Grand Army defeated the Austrian, Prussian, and Russian armies.
B. From 1807 to 1812, Napoleon was the master of Europe.

1. His Grand Empire was composed of three major parts:
   a. The French Empire
   b. Dependent states
   c. Allied states.
Napoleon’s Grand Empire

Map Key

- France, 1799
- French Empire, 1812
- Dependent states, 1812
- States allied with Napoleon, 1812
- States allied against Napoleon, 1812
- Major battle
C. Within his empire, Napoleon sought to spread some of the principles of the French Revolution, including legal equality, religious toleration, and economic freedom.

1. The nobility and the clergy everywhere in these states lost their special privileges.

D. Napoleon hoped that his Grand Empire would last for centuries, but his empire collapsed almost as rapidly as it was formed.

1. Two major reasons help explain this collapse:

   a. Britain's ability to resist Napoleon and the rise of nationalism.
E. Napoleon was never able to conquer Great Britain because of its sea power.

1. Napoleon hoped to invade Britain, but the British defeated the combined French-Spanish fleet at Trafalgar in 1805.

   a. This battle ended Napoleon's plans for invasion.
F. Napoleon then turned to his Continental System to defeat Britain.
   1. The goal was to stop British goods from reaching the European continent to be sold there.
   2. By weakening Britain economically, Napoleon would destroy its ability to wage war.

G. The Continental System failed.
   1. Allied states resented being told by Napoleon that they could not trade with the British.
H. A second significant factor in the defeat of Napoleon was nationalism.

1. Nationalism is the sense of unique identity of a people based on common language, religion, and national symbols.

I. Napoleon marched his armies through the Germanies, Spain, Italy, and Poland, arousing new ideas of nationalism.

1. The conquered peoples became united in their hatred of Napoleon.