

## Two Views of Napoleon

**What was it like living in France during the reign of Napoleon Bonaparte? Maybe the answer can be found within these two document extracts?**

**Instructions:** Read and analyze the following documents and answer the questions that follow using complete sentences for each response.

### Document 1

This is taken from *Ten Years of Exile* written by **Madame de Staël**. She was a member of the French royalty and was exiled as she bitterly opposed the rule and ideas of Napoleon.

What particularly characterizes Bonaparte’s government is his profound contempt for all the intelligent riches of human nature: virtue, dignity, religion, enthusiasm; in his eyes they are “the external enemies of the continent,” to use his favorite expression. He would like to persuade men by force and by cunning, and he considers all else to be stupidity or folly (foolishness).

I do not believe that when Bonaparte became head of the government, he had yet formulated the plan for a universal monarchy, but I do believe what he himself said to one of my friends, a few days after the 18 Brumaire (the day Napoleon overthrew the Five-Man Directory). “It is necessary” he said “to do something new every three months, in order to captivate the imagination of the French nation, with whom anyone who stands still is lost.” His system was to encroach (intrude) daily upon France’s liberty and Europe’s independence. By alternating between cunning and force he has subjugated (conquered) Europe.

1. According to Madame de Staël, how does Napoleon Bonaparte treat the people of France?
2. What does Madame de Staël say are Napoleon’s only methods of persuasion?

## Document 2

This excerpt is taken from **Marshal Michel Ney** who was one of Napoleon's army officers who discussed the rule of Napoleon upon his return to Paris in 1815.

Officers, sub-officers, soldiers! The cause of the Bourbons (French royal family) is lost forever. The legitimate dynasty France had adopted is about to remount the throne. To the emperor Napoleon, our sovereign, belongs alone the right to rule over our beautiful country. Whether the Bourbon nobility choose to return to exile or consent to live among us, what does it matter to us? The times are gone when the people were governed by suppressing their rights. Liberty triumphs in the end, and Napoleon, our august emperor, comes to confirm it. Soldiers, I have often led you to victory. Now I would escort you to join this immortal legion which the Emperor Napoleon conducts to Paris, and which in a few days will reach the capital.

1. According to Marshal Michel Ney, what has Napoleon Bonaparte restored to the people of France?
2. The points of view in Documents 1 and 2 are totally different. In your opinion, why do you think that the testimonies of Madame de Staël and Marshal Michel Ney are so different? Explain your response using specific examples from **both** documents.