

## Napoleon's hat most expensive ever sold at auction

23rd November 2023



Is it possible to spend over \$2 million on a hat? The answer is "yes" if the hat once belonged to the French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte. An iconic hat that Napoleon is famous for was sold at an auction this week for \$2.1 million. This is a record for a hat, so it is

the most expensive piece of headwear ever sold. The auction sale broke the previous record for a hat, which was \$2 million. That hat also once belonged to Napoleon. A historian said Napoleon liked hats and owned around 120 of them. This week's record-breaking hat is made of felt and has the red, white and blue colours of the French flag on it. Experts say it dates back to the early 1800s. Thousands of artists have created paintings of Napoleon wearing it.

Napoleon is one of France's most famous historical figures. He was a general who played a key part in the French Revolution of 1787-1799. He helped to take over the French government, and then became emperor of France in 1804. His reign as emperor came to an end in 1815 after he lost the Battle of Waterloo to the British. He was sent to live on a remote island in the South Atlantic Ocean called St. Helena. He died there six years later in 1821, aged 51. The auction of his hat coincides with the release of a new Hollywood movie about his rise to power, and his relationship with the empress Josephine. The movie is called "Napoleon". It is directed by Ridley Scott and stars Joaquin Phoenix as Napoleon and Vanessa Kirby as Josephine.

Sources: [cbsnews.com](https://www.cbsnews.com) / [cnn.com](https://www.cnn.com) / [yahoo.com](https://www.yahoo.com)

### Writing

Hats are unnecessary. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

possible / spend / hat / emperor / auction / record / historian / flag / artists / painting / historical figures / general / revolution / government / battle / remote island / movie

### True / False

- 1) A hat worn by Napoleon Bonaparte sold for \$2.5 million. T / F
- 2) The previous record for a hat was one worn by Julius Caesar. T / F
- 3) The hat that was sold comes from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. T / F
- 4) The article says thousands of artists have painted Napoleon with his hat. T / F
- 5) Napoleon Bonaparte became the French emperor in 1815. T / F
- 6) Bonaparte was sent by the British to live on a South Pacific island. T / F
- 7) Bonaparte died at the age of 51. T / F
- 8) A movie about Napoleon is directed by Joaquin Phoenix. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. <b>belonged</b>  | a. people           |
| 2. <b>famous</b>    | b. important        |
| 3. <b>expensive</b> | c. made             |
| 4. <b>experts</b>   | d. happens together |
| 5. <b>created</b>   | e. well known       |
| 6. <b>figures</b>   | f. faraway          |
| 7. <b>key</b>       | g. was owned by     |
| 8. <b>remote</b>    | h. big names        |
| 9. <b>coincides</b> | i. specialists      |
| 10. <b>stars</b>    | j. costly           |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) Do you have a favourite hat?
- c) What do you know about Napoleon?
- d) What do you think of auctions?
- e) Have you ever used online auctions like eBay?
- f) Would you like to see the movie 'Napoleon'?
- g) Do we need hats?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the auction house?

## Phrase Match

1. sold at an auction
  2. the most expensive piece of headwear
  3. The auction sale broke the previous
  4. colours of the
  5. Experts say it dates
  6. Napoleon is one of France's most famous
  7. He was a general who played
  8. His reign as emperor came
  9. He was sent to live
  10. a new Hollywood movie about his
- a. historical figures
  - b. to an end in 1815
  - c. French flag
  - d. rise to power
  - e. this week
  - f. record for a hat
  - g. on a remote island
  - h. back to the early 1800s
  - i. a key part
  - j. ever sold

## Discussion – Student B

- a) How important are hats to you?
- b) When are the best times to wear a hat?
- c) What do you think of spending \$2.1 million on a hat?
- d) What's the most you'd pay for a hat?
- e) Which is better – a hat or a cap?
- f) Should baseball caps be worn backwards?
- g) What would you do with Napoleon's hat?
- h) How many hats do you need?

## Spelling

1. the hat once beodngle to the French emperor
2. sold at an ocunati
3. the most expensive piece of arhweade
4. broke the opusriev record for a hat
5. rxestpe say it dates back to the early 1800s
6. Thousands of sttiars have created paintings
7. famous sohciirtla figures
8. the French ieRolnuotv of 1787-1799
9. His eirgn as emperor came to an end
10. He was sent to live on a meerto island
11. icedonsci with the release
12. his hairilospent with the empress Josephine

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. e	3. j	4. i	5. c
6. a	7. b	8. f	9. d	10. h

## Role Play

### Role A – A Hat

You think a hat is the best thing to buy at an auction. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): movie memorabilia, jewellery or a painting.

### Role B – Movie Memorabilia

You think movie memorabilia is the best thing to buy at an auction. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): a hat, jewelery or a painting.

### Role C – Jewellery

You think jewellery is the best thing to buy at an auction. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): movie memorabilia, a hat or a painting.

### Role D – A Painting

You think a painting is the best thing to buy at an auction. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): movie memorabilia, jewellery or a hat.

## Speaking – Auction

Rank these with your partner. Put the best things to buy at an auction at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Hats
- Car licence plates
- Movie memorabilia
- Rock star clothes
- Classic cars
- Houses
- Jewellery
- Paintings

### Answers – True False

1	F	2	F	3	T	4	T	5	F	6	F	7	T	8	F
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.