

## Quotes from the Prince

What does he mean when he said...

- "Good laws follow good armies..."
- "Above all, the first priority of the prince should be the protection of his power."
- "He who has relied least on fortune is established the strongest"  
(Luck has nothing to do with success)
- "Nothing makes a prince so much esteemed as great enterprises and setting a fine example"  
(Always do your best work because most others don't)
- "Is it necessary to take such measures that, when they believe no longer, it may be possible to make them believe by force."
- "For injuries ought to be done all at one time, so that, being tasted less, they offend less; benefits ought to be given little by little, so that the flavor of them may last longer."
- "We have not seen great things done in our time except by those who have been considered mean; the rest have failed."

Are these quotes still relevant, do they describe human nature today as they did in 1215?

Machiavelli's philosophy is the foundation of modern political ideas. Machiavelli ideas are used by all rulers good and evil. Power, how to use it, how to keep it and how to run a state. Machiavelli's ideas were used by the great like Washington and Madison and the evil like Hitler and Mussolini. Machiavelli is considered both a wise observer of true human nature and a promoter of evil. You decide.

"Niccolo Machiavelli was born on May 3, 1469 in Florence, Italy. Machiavelli was a political philosopher and diplomat during the Renaissance, and is most famous for his political treatise, *The Prince* (1513), that has become a cornerstone of modern political philosophy.

## ***2.2a Power, Machiavelli and the Prince***

In *The Prince*, Machiavelli offered a monarchical ruler advice designed to keep that ruler in power. He recommended policies that would discourage mass political activism, and channel subjects' energies into private pursuits. Machiavelli wanted to persuade the monarch that he could best preserve his power by the judicious use of violence, by respecting private property and the traditions of his subjects, and by promoting material prosperity. Machiavelli held that political life cannot be governed by a single set of moral or religious absolutes, and that the monarch may sometimes be excused for performing acts of violence and deception that would be ethically indefensible in private life."

### **The Prince Assignments**

#### **Assignment I -- Answer these questions.**

1. The program refers to Machiavelli's name as a synonym for evil. How accurate do you feel that assessment is?

---

---

---

---

2. Machiavelli said that rivers and men can be controlled, but cannot be trusted. Discuss what this statement means and whether or not you think it is true. Relate this idea to the principles of the Constitution and to Federalist 51. In Federalist 51 Madison wrote of the need to have a constitution that didn't just rely on the goodness of human nature. He wrote that "A dependence on the people is, no doubt, the primary control on the government; but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions."

---

---

---

---

## ***2.2 Power, Machiavelli and the Prince***

3. Why was Abraham Lincoln cited as an example of a Machiavellian leader? How did Lincoln justify his actions? To what extent do you believe he was right to act that way?

---

---

---

---

## ***2.2b Assignment II -- Position Paper***

EQ: What are examples in history that Machiavelli ideas are relevant to the present and the past 225 years.

Outline:

I. Intro

Background on Machiavelli

Answer EQ

II. Example I of EQ

Quote The Prince to back up your example

III. Example II

Quote The Prince to back up your example

IV. Conclusion

State the significance of Machiavelli's in the understanding of power

### 2.2c Contemporary Politicians and Machiavelli

Throughout the video, *The Prince*, the faces of modern political leaders are flashed on the screen while attributes of Machiavelli's Prince are discussed.

Review the video to identify those leaders and to note what attributes are under discussion for each.

1. Name the current president

---

2. Identify at least two ways the president applies Machiavelli's ideas.

---

---

---

---

3. How does the president follow these two ideas?

- "Good laws follow good armies..."
- "Above all, the first priority of the prince should be the protection of his power."

---

---

---

---

