

## Teacher Overview Objectives: *The Prince* Close Read

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Analyze *The Prince* by Machiavelli to determine whether he believed it better for a ruler to be loved than feared or feared than loved and why he felt that way.

2

Identify rulers that we have studied this year and cite evidence from their time in power to determine if they ruled in a way that Machiavelli would have approved of.

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## **According to Machiavelli, is it better for a ruler to be loved than feared or feared than loved? Why?**

Objective: Analyze *The Prince* by Machiavelli to determine whether he believed it better for a ruler to be loved than feared or feared than loved and why he felt that way.

# **FEAR / LOVE**

Think about the principal of your school. His/her job is to make decisions that are best for keeping the school safe for students and staff and making sure that every student has the opportunity to get a quality education that will prepare the world after high school.

**For a principal to do their job the best, is it better for them to be loved than feared or feared than loved?**

**Directions:** In the chart below write down the reasons you can think of that support both sides, then turn to a partner in class and share your ideas. If they have ideas you haven't thought of, record them in your chart.

**It is better to be LOVED than to be feared.**

**It is better to be FEARED than to be loved.**

## Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527): *The Prince* (1513)



Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527)

Niccolò Machiavelli was born in Florence, Italy, on May 3, 1469. At the time, Florence was a wealthy **city-state** in Italy and the heart of the **Renaissance**. The wealthy Medici family, who made their money through banking, ruled Florence. Italy was divided up into four city-states and because of this division the area was at risk of being **invaded** by stronger, more powerful states in eastern Europe.

Machiavelli was a Renaissance **humanist**. He learned Greek and Latin in school and was a student of Roman history. He even published a commentary on the works of the Roman historian Livy entitled *Discourses on Livy* in which he used lessons from the Roman past to suggest ways of dealing with problems in Florence in the 1500s.

In 1494, the Medici family was run out of Florence. During their 14 year exile from the city, Machiavelli worked for the government in Florence as a diplomat. He was in charge of the republic's foreign affairs and has been described as a "devious" civil servant.

In 1512, the Medici family returned to rule Florence. They imprisoned Machiavelli and tortured him because they suspected him of **conspiring** to keep them out of power. He was **exiled** from the city in 1513 to his father's house south of Florence. While in exile, Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* (1513). *The Prince* is a guide book on ruling based on his experiences working for the government of Florence, his diplomatic trips throughout Europe, and his study of Roman history. Hoping to win the favor of the Medici he dedicated *The Prince* to Lorenzo di Piero de'Medici the ruler of Florence at that time.

After the publication of his book, Machiavelli held a number of posts in the Florentine government. Fueled by the newly invented **printing press**, *The Prince* was widely read and translated and has influenced philosophers and rulers throughout history. Because of *The Prince* Machiavelli is now known as the "father of modern political theory."

Sources: Niccolò Machiavelli. (2015). The Biography.com website. Retrieved 10:18, Apr 23, 2015, from <http://www.biography.com/people/niccolò-machiavelli-9392446>; Niccolò Machiavelli. Harvey Mansfield, Encyclopedia Britannica. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/354571/Niccolo-Machiavelli>

### Pre-Reading Questions: Contextualization

Who <b>wrote</b> <i>The Prince</i> ?	
What is the <b>perspective</b> of the speaker? (Hint: What ideas or philosophies does the speaker believe in? Are they from a different region?)	
Based on the speaker's perspective, what <b>predictions</b> can you make about what you might read in the document below?	
<b>When</b> was <i>The Prince</i> written?	
<b>Where</b> was <i>The Prince</i> written?	
<b>Who was the audience</b> for <i>The Prince</i> ? How does the audience for this text effect what was included or excluded?	

1b. **Why** was *The Prince* written?

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## ***The Prince: Part I: That Which Concerns a Prince on the Subject of the Art of War***

1. Based on the title of this section, what do you predict it will be about?

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1      The Prince ought to have no other aim or thought, nor select anything else for his study, than  
2      war and its rules and **discipline**; for this is the sole art that belongs to him who rules, and it is of  
3      such force that it not only upholds those who are born princes, but it often enables men to rise  
4      from a private **station** to that rank. And, on the contrary, it is seen that when princes have thought  
5      more of ease than of arms they have lost their states. And the first cause of your losing it is to  
6      **neglect** this art; and what enables you to acquire a state is to be master of the art. Francesco  
7      Sforza, through being martial [soldier-like], from a private person became Duke of Milan; and the  
8      sons, through avoiding the hardships and troubles of arms, from dukes became private persons.  
9      For among other evils which being unarmed brings you, it causes you to be despised [hated], and  
10     this is one of those ignominies [shame or disgrace] against which a prince ought to guard himself,  
11     as is shown later on.

Source: Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. W. K. Marriott. London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1908, pp. 117-118, 129-131.

<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/prince-excerpt.asp>

### **Part I Questions**

2. According to Machiavelli, what “aim or thought” should be most important to “The Prince”?

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3. What does Machiavelli mean when he writes, “when princes have thought more of ease than of arms they have lost their states (li. 4-5)?”

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4. On lines 7-9, Machiavelli tells a story about about Francesco Sforza.  
a. Paraphrase this story.

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b. Why did Machiavelli include this story?

5. According to Machiavelli, what might be an effect of “being unarmed (li. 9)?”

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6. Based on this excerpt, is Machiavelli arguing that it is better to be loved or feared as a leader? Explain, using evidence from Part I.

## ***The Prince: Part II: Concerning Things for Which Men, and Especially Princes, are Blamed***

7. Based on the title of this section, what do you predict it will be about?

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12 It remains now to see what ought to be the rules of conduct for a prince toward subject and  
13 friends. And as I know that many have written on this point, I expect I shall be considered  
14 presumptuous [overconfident] in mentioning it again, especially as in discussing it I shall depart  
15 from the methods of other people. But it being my intention to write a thing which shall be useful to  
16 him who apprehends it, it appears to me more appropriate to follow up the real truth of a matter  
17 than the imagination of it; for many have pictured republics [governments run by elected  
18 representatives] and principalities [states] which in fact have never been known or seen, because  
19 how one lives is so far distant from how one ought to live, that he who neglects what is done for  
20 what ought to be done, sooner effects his ruin than his preservation; for a man who wishes to act  
21 entirely up to his professions [claims or statements that are often false] of virtue [goodness] soon  
22 meets with what destroys him among so much that is evil.

23 Hence, it is necessary for a prince wishing to hold his own to know how to do wrong, and to  
24 make use of it or not according to necessity. Therefore, putting on one side imaginary things  
25 concerning a prince, and discussing those which are real, I say that all men when they are spoken  
26 of, and chiefly princes for being more highly placed, are remarkable for some of those qualities  
27 which bring them either blame or praise; and thus it is that one is reputed [thought to be] liberal,  
28 another miserly ...; one is reputed generous, one rapacious; one cruel, one compassionate; one  
29 faithless, another faithful.... And I know that every one will confess that it would be most  
30 praiseworthy in a prince to exhibit all the above qualities that are considered good; but because  
31 they can neither be entirely possessed nor observed, for human conditions do not permit it, it is  
32 necessary for him to be sufficiently prudent [wise] that he may know how to avoid the reproach  
33 [disapproval] of those vices [wrongdoings] which would lose him his state...

Source: Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. W. K. Marriott. London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1908, pp. 117-118, 129-131.

<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/prince-excerpt.asp>

### **Part II Questions**

8. Machiavelli notes that “many have pictured republics [governments run by elected representatives] and principalities [states] which in fact have never been known or seen (li. 17-18).” According to Machiavelli how is his writing different?

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9. In the line, “he who neglects what is done for what ought to be done, sooner effects his ruin than his preservation (li. 20)” what do the words, “ruin” and “preservation” mean?

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10. In your own words, explain what Machiavelli means when he writes, “he who neglects what is done for what ought to be done, sooner effects his ruin than his preservation (li. 20).”

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11. What does Machiavelli mean when he states, “a man who wishes to act entirely up to his professions [claims or statements that are often false] of virtue [goodness] soon meets with what destroys him (li. 21-22)?”

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12. In line 23 what does the phrase, “hold his own” mean?

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13. In line 23 what is the meaning of the word, “wrong?”

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14. In your own words, what is Machiavelli’s advice to the Prince in the first sentence of the second paragraph of this excerpt?

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Examine this excerpt from lines 27-29.

*thus it is that one is reputed [thought to be] liberal, another miserly ...; one is reputed generous, one rapacious; one cruel, one compassionate; one faithless, another faithful....*

15. What is the relationship between the underlined pairs of words that are separated by semicolons (;)?

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16. Based on the sentence provided above from lines 27 -29 fill out the vocabulary chart below with definitions for the words that are left blank.

Word	Definition	Word	Definition
<b>liberal</b>		<b>miserly</b>	stingy; unwilling to give up what one has to another person
<b>generous</b>		<b>rapacious</b>	greedy
<b>cruel</b>	willfully causing pain and suffering to others	<b>compassionate</b>	
<b>faithless</b>		<b>faithful</b>	loyal

17. According to Machiavelli, why can a Prince not “exhibit all the above qualities that are considered good (li. 30-31)” that he lists in this paragraph?

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18. Since a Prince cannot “exhibit” all of the good qualities of a ruler, what quality does Machiavelli argue he should have in lines 32 - 33?

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**19. Based on this excerpt, is Machiavelli arguing that it is better to be loved or feared as a leader? Explain, using evidence from Part II.**

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## ***The Prince: Part III: Concerning Cruelty and Clemency [Mercy], and Whether it is Better to be Loved than Feared***

20. Based on the title of this section, what do you predict it will be about?

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34      Upon this a question arises: whether it is better to be loved than feared or feared than loved? It  
35      may be answered that one should wish to be both, but, because it is difficult to unite them in one  
36      person, it is much safer to be feared than loved, when, of the two, either must be dispensed with.  
37      Because this is to be asserted [stated as fact] in general of men, that they are ungrateful, fickle  
38      [quickly changing], false, cowardly, covetous [greedy], and as long as you succeed they are yours  
39      entirely; they will offer you their blood, property, life, and children, as is said above, when the need  
40      is far distant; but when it approaches they turn against you. And that prince who, relying entirely on  
41      their promises, has neglected other precautions, is ruined; because friendships that are obtained  
42      by payments, and not by nobility or greatness of mind, may indeed be earned, but they are not  
43      secured, and in time of need cannot be relied upon; and men have less scruple  
44      [hesitation/reluctance] in offending one who is beloved than one who is feared, for love is  
45      preserved by the link of obligation which, owing to the baseness [lack of moral character] of men,  
46      is broken at every opportunity for their advantage; but fear preserves you by a dread of punishment  
47      which never fails.  
48      Nevertheless a prince ought to inspire fear in such a way that, if he does not win love, he avoids  
49      hatred; because he can endure very well being feared whilst he is not hated, which will always be  
50      as long as he abstains [stops oneself] from the property of his citizens and subjects and from their  
51      women.

Source: Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. W. K. Marriott. London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1908, pp. 117-118, 129-131.  
<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/prince-excerpt.asp>

### **Part III Questions**

21. According to Machiavelli, what is the answer to the question, “whether it is better to be loved than feared or feared than loved?”

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22. According to Machiavelli, what are the qualities of men?

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23. What does Machiavelli mean when he writes, “as long as you succeed they [men] are yours entirely; they will offer you their blood, property, life, and children, as is said above, when the need is far distant; but when it approaches they turn against you (li. 38-40)?”

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24. According to Machiavelli, what are the consequences for a prince who relies entirely on the promises of men (li. 40-43)? Why is that so?

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25. According to Machiavelli, why do “men have less scruple [hesitation/reluctance] in offending one who is beloved than one who is feared (li. 43-44)?”

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26. According to Machiavelli, what must a prince prevent himself from doing to avoid hatred from his citizens and subjects?

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## Synthesis Task

Given the excerpts presented from *The Prince* by Machiavelli in Part I, Part II, and Part III of this close reading assignment, **describe the qualities and actions of Machiavelli's ideal prince.**