

What Would Machiavelli Say?!?!?

*Directions: Find a current political leader (within 100 years) and evaluate at least three of their actions, speeches, policies, etc. using Machiavelli's The Prince as a guide. Remember, you are evaluating their political performance as if through the eyes of Machiavelli. Make sure to correctly cite the speech, article, etc. that you use as a reference and include a link to it at the end of your paper. Below are some writing reminders and additional passages from the book with commonly accepted interpretations.

Additional Quotes/Explanations:

1. *"At this point one may note that men must be either pampered or annihilated. They avenge light offenses; they cannot avenge severe ones; hence, the harm one does to a man must be such as to obviate any fear of revenge."*

This passage from Chapter III is an example of logical reasoning conspicuously devoid of ethical considerations. A prince must realize that he has two options: benevolence and destruction. Because the latter option will cause resentment among the people, he should choose it only if he is absolutely sure that there will be no ill consequences--that the destruction he incurs will eliminate or disable any parties that might seek to revenge themselves against him. Feelings of pity or compassion are meaningless. Self-interest and self-protections are in this case the motivating factors and are to be pursued ruthlessly.

2. *"A prince must have no other objective, no other thought, nor take up any profession but that of war, its methods and its discipline, for that is the only art expected of a ruler. And it is of such great value that it not only keeps hereditary princes in power, but often raises men of lowly condition to that rank."*

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3. *"Only the expenditure of one's own resources is harmful; and indeed, nothing feeds upon itself as liberality does. The more it is indulged, the fewer are the means to indulge it further. As a consequence, a prince becomes poor and contemptible or, to escape poverty, becomes rapacious and hateful. Of all the things he must guard against, hatred and contempt come first, and liberality leads to both. Therefore it is better to have a name for miserliness, which breeds disgrace without hatred, than, in pursuing a name for liberality, to resort to rapacity, which breeds both disgrace and hatred."*

This passage from Chapter XVI illustrates Machiavelli's attitude toward virtue and statecraft. Machiavelli advises the prince to disregard the principles of virtue when acting on behalf of his state. Instead, while it is desirable for a prince to act virtuously when he can, he should never let perceptions of virtue interfere with statecraft. Even though generosity seems admirable, it is ultimately detrimental to the state, and therefore should be avoided. A prince will never be hated for lack of virtue, he will be hated only if he fails in his duty to maintain the state. Virtuous action, in that it often promotes self-sacrifice often conflicts with that duty.

Writing Reminders

- Do not begin a paragraph with: you, he, she, it, we, they. Specific is always better than vague.
- Do not EVER use the following statements: I think, I feel, I believe

- 99.9% of the time when writing a history paper remain in the third person, past tense.
- If you do not know what a word means, do not use it.
- If a word or phrase is not needed get rid of it. If it is not making your point more clear get rid of it.
- Remember to proofread for correct grammar and spelling. Your first draft is probably not your best work.
- Before using an abbreviation write out the full name of the organization, treaty, or war at least once.
- Proper nouns should be capitalized and common nouns should not.
 - Pope John Paul II vs. the pope
 - King Henry VIII vs. the king