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Literature Teaching Unit

Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



The Prince

by Niccolò Machiavelli

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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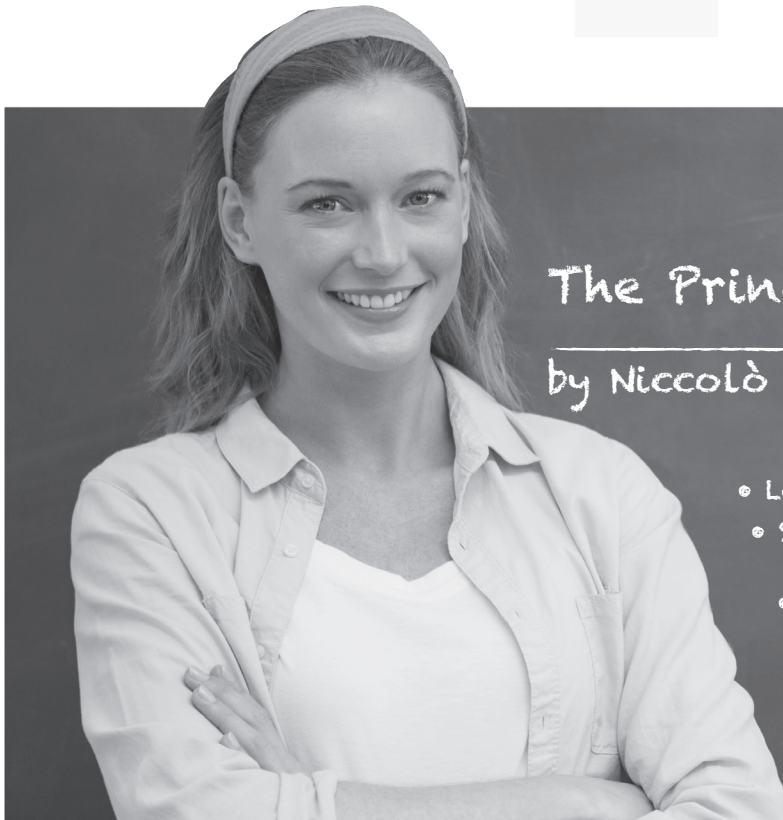
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 **Prestwick House**

P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938
www.prestwickhouse.com
800.932.4593

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Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. discuss Machiavelli's reasons for writing *The Prince*, and comment on how his audience may have influenced its content.
2. point out the general characteristics a ruler needs to maintain control of his government and the love of his people.
3. comment on the role fortune has in the success or failure of a Prince, and identify the steps he may take to protect himself during bad times.
4. relate the myth of Achilles and Chiron and how it illustrates the qualities a leader needs to be successful.
5. discuss the four types of principalities (hereditary, mixed, new, ecclesiastical) in terms of their defense against foreign powers, ease of maintenance, and stability.
6. comment on the morality or immorality of Machiavelli's advice including the following:
 - It is better to be feared than loved.
 - A ruler must do evil if politically necessary.
 - Sometimes it is necessary to destroy a city to hold it.
7. differentiate among the four types (mercenaries, mixed, native, auxiliary) of army troops available to a Prince, and point out the advantages and disadvantages of each.
8. comment on Machiavelli's negative opinion of human nature and how government can use these qualities for its own purposes.
9. discuss Machiavelli's belief that a Prince's best fortress is the love of his people.
10. define maxim and point out examples in the text.
11. discuss the general characteristics a ruler should look for when selecting his advisors.
12. comment on the characteristics of a republic, which makes it more difficult to conquer and hold than a principality.
13. point out why Cesare Borgia is a role model for the successful Prince in *The Prince* and why King Louis is not.

Questions for Discussion and Essay

1. Why is a hereditary Princedom easier to maintain than a new Princedom?
2. What qualities of a republic make it difficult to hold?
3. For what reasons is rebellion common in mixed Princedoms, and what steps can a new Prince take to maintain order?
4. Why does Alexander successfully and easily govern the Princedom?
5. In what sense is an ecclesiastical Princedom the easiest to maintain, but the most difficult to obtain?
6. Rewrite each of the following four axioms for governing Princedoms in your own words:
 - A. “He who is the cause of another’s greatness is himself undone.”
 - B. “The wise man should always follow the roads that have been trodden by the great, and imitate those who have most excelled.”
 - C. “Injuries, therefore, should be inflicted all at once, that their ill savour being less lasting may the less offend; whereas, benefits should be conferred little by little, that so they may be more fully relished.”
 - D. “It ought not to be difficult for a prudent Prince,...to maintain the spirits of his subjects during a siege; provided always that victuals and other means of defense do not run short.”
7. Why does Machiavelli consider Cesare Borgia a good role model?
8. How does fortune contribute to a Prince’s greatness?
9. What is the difference between an auxiliary army, mercenaries, and national arms?
10. List the qualities a Prince must develop within himself to become a “master of the art of war.”
11. How does Machiavelli use King Louis as an example of poor leadership and Cesare Borgia as a example of good leadership?

The Prince

Dedication – To the Magnificent Lorenzo Di Piero De’ Medici

VOCABULARY

allurements – attractions
antiquity – history; ancient times
eminence – greatness
extrinsic – additional features; unrelated, irrelevant
malignity – hatred

1. What prized possession does Machiavelli give the Prince, hoping to please him?

2. Machiavelli writes that to “understand the People a man should be a Prince, and to have a clear notion of Princes he should belong to the People.” What does this passage tell the reader about Machiavelli’s qualifications to write this book?

3. Machiavelli dedicated this book to Lorenzo Di Piero De’ Medici. In 1512, Machiavelli was removed from his high government position when the Medici family assumed absolute power of Florence. Then, in 1513, Machiavelli was falsely accused of conspiring against the Medici family. As a result of these accusations, Lorenzo had Machiavelli imprisoned. Some critics believe the last paragraph of the dedication is a cleverly concealed insult to Lorenzo. Others believe Machiavelli is writing this book to gain a government position in the new, Medici-controlled government. Which opinion do you support and why?

Chapter III - Of Mixed Princedoms

VOCABULARY

abode – a home
aggrandized – made more powerful
allege – to state; assert
axiom – truism
ceded – yielded
conciliated – satisfied
diligence – a steady effort
disaffected – discontent; resentful
discordance – a disagreement, conflict
dissolution – termination
dominions – territories
efficacious – effective
ensue – to follow, pursue
expedient – a solution; plan
formidable – strong
hitherto – up till now; so far
inchoate – immature
insolence – rudeness
maxim – a fundamental truth
obliged – indebted
sagacious – having sound judgment, wise
scruple – to hesitate
statecraft – the art of leading a nation
subjection – ruled by others
temporal – natural; as opposed to spiritual
tenure – holding a position or occupation permanently
tributary – a contributory
unmolested – undisturbed
valour – courage
vexations – irritations
wrest – to take by force
wrought – created; produced

1. Why can the new Prince of a mixed Princedom not avoid offending his new subjects?

**Chapter VII - Of New Princedoms Acquired by
the Aid of Others and by Good Fortune**

VOCABULARY

adherence – bond, unity
affable – friendly
annulling – invalidating
desirous – wanting
desist – to stop
despoiled – robbed
exigencies – urgent needs
factions – opposing sides
fidelity – faithfulness
hindrance – a barrier, obstacle
ingratiated – brought into favor deliberately
magnanimous – gracious, unselfish
partisan – members of a group
populace – the people; population
quelling – suppressing
resentment – ill will
stratagem – a plan
superfluous – excessive
surmounted – overcome
Tribunal – the court
tumult – a disturbance
waywardness – unpredictability

1. Why do Princes who come to power suddenly through good fortune rather than by their own merit have a difficult time holding onto their Princedoms?
