

Machiavelli's *The Prince*: Composition Exam

General Directions: Each of the following questions can be answered in approximately a paragraph on your own paper.

1. Do not write on this paper.
2. Make sure that your answer re-states the question.
3. Write in complete sentences.
4. Do not use a pronoun before you have used a noun to serve as an antecedent.
5. Punctuate the title correctly.
6. Spell all words from the handouts correctly.
7. Use specific examples and quotations to support your answers.
8. Follow directions for correct heading etc.

Part One: Answer ALL of the following questions.

1. Is *The Prince* amoral, immoral, or moral?
2. How can a prince be both a lion and a fox?
3. Choose a significant leader from history or contemporary politics and evaluate him according to Machiavelli's criteria.
4. Clarify Machiavelli's discussion of fortune (luck, chance, fate). In short, explain how Machiavelli defines fortune and free will and what man's options are for controlling his own fate.
5. Does the end justify the means?

Part Two: Choose ONE of the following assignments.

1. Machiavelli has come to life in the twentieth century and is sponsoring a "Ruler of the Year" contest. Write an advertisement for the contest, being sure to include criteria for judging the winner, prizes to be awarded, etc. Include a list of nominees.
2. Assume you are Machiavelli and write a letter giving advice to President Clinton. Be specific about your concerns

Part Three: Would Machiavelli approve or disapprove each of the following slogans? Indicate "yes" with a +; "no" with a -. Then, explain.

1. The proof of the pudding is in the eating.
2. Honesty is the best policy.
3. Save the surface and you save all.
4. The means justify the end.
5. Do one to others before they do one to you.
6. Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever.

Part Four: Answer each of the following in well-developed and supported paragraph.

1. In *Of the Reason and the State* (1598), Giovanni Botero argued that the state is an ethical entity which, though it might use unethical means to attain its ends, must never divest those ends of their ethical content. It was difficult to conceive of a conglomeration of persons—an estate—as one ethical entity, but not at all difficult to conceive of a single person—the prince—as the personification of the ethical state. Would Machiavelli agree?
2. Explain how *The Prince* is a handbook for tyrants, a do-it-yourself book for rulers, and an analysis of the methods of exercising political power
3. Support one of the following topic sentences:
 - a. Machiavellianism is nothing more than the unscrupulous use of force and evil.
 - b. For Machiavelli, the preservation of the state is the transcendent morality in politics.
 - c. A nation is like a work of art and the artist is the prince.
 - d. Only a patriotic and ruthless prince can preserve a nation by his craft and force.
 - e. Fear, cruelty and deception are recommended as regular instruments of force.

Major Concepts from Machiavelli's *The Prince*

- I. The prince should be concerned with nothing but war.
- II. A prince who wants to keep his post should learn how to not be good, and then put that knowledge to use.
- III. A prince cannot become known for being liberal without harming his own security, and he won't mind being known as a miser, if he judges prudently.
- IV. Being feared is safer than being loved because people are less concerned with a man who makes himself loved than with one who makes himself feared.
- V. A prudent prince does not keep his word when doing so would be against his interest, or when the reasons which made him pledge it no longer apply.
- VI. The prince should try to avoid anything that makes him contemptible (or despised or hated).