

Machiavelli's *The Prince* Study Guide: Detailed Chapter-by-Chapter Questions

Introduction

1. How old was Machiavelli after he had completed *The Prince*?
2. What was the mission of exceptional importance to Machiavelli and why was it so important?
3. Why was the duke a perfect model?
4. What happened to Machiavelli in 1512?
5. What is the basis for Machiavelli's "instinctive effort to establish a science of politics"?
6. What was Erasmus's antithetical "vision" to Machiavelli's?
7. Why does Machiavelli want people to be religious?
8. How does Machiavelli agree with St. Augustine?
9. Why must a prince read histories?
10. If his Prince is not a "champion of absolutism" what should he be?
11. Define "virtu"
12. What is the "central issue"?
13. What is one of Machiavelli's motives for writing the book?
14. Why could this book have been called *The New Prince*?
15. Why is Cesare Borgia an "exemplary figure"?
16. What is the effect of unprincipled violence?
17. How can Fortune be controlled?
18. Compare and Contrast Cicero's and Machiavelli's ideas about governing.
19. Define pluralism.
20. What is the most important effect that Machiavelli has on the modern reader?

Dedication

21. What does Machiavelli offer to "The magnificent Lorenzo di Piero de' Medici" instead of the customary treasures?
22. What is Machiavelli's purpose for writing the book?

Chapter 1:

23. Give an example of an entirely new hereditary state.
24. Give an example of a new state annexed to a hereditary state.

Chapter 2:

25. What is the main discussion going to be about?
26. Give the characteristics of a hereditary prince that causes him to be loved.
27. What does 'change' always produce?

Chapter 3:

28. Why do men change their rulers willingly?
29. Explain the quandary that a new ruler faces upon conquering a country?
30. Why did Duke Lodovico to lose Milan?
31. What makes a new conquest easy to hold?
32. What is needed to hold a country "differing in language, customs, or laws"?
33. Describe the greatest deterrent to an outside attack?
34. How can a prince avoid revenge?
35. What presents the greatest drain on the fortunes of the original state?
36. What is bond to happen when a foreigner enters a country?

37. Explain the analogy in chapter 3?
38. Why did King Louis of France invade Italy?
39. What was Louis' main downfall?
40. What were Louis' 5 errors?
41. Cardinal Rouen observed that the Italians did not understand war, but what did Machiavelli say the French did not understand?
42. Paraphrase Machiavelli's general rule.

Chapter 4:

43. What are the two ways to govern a new state?
44. What are the difficulties encountered when seizing the kingdom of the Turk?
45. What is the only thing to fear?
46. Why isn't it enough to exterminate the family of the prince?

Chapter 5:

47. What are the three courses open for those who wish to hold a state accustomed to living under its own laws and freedoms?
48. Why should the master of a city not destroy it?
49. What is there in republics that will "never permit them to allow the memory of their former liberty to rest"?

Chapter 6:

50. What is the difficulty in "walking... in paths beaten by others"?
51. Summarize and explain the analogy that Machiavelli uses about aiming high?
52. What is the best thing for a new prince to rely upon?
53. Explain the following quote "Without that opportunity their powers of mind would have been extinguished, and without those powers the opportunity would have come in vain.
54. What is "perilous" and "uncertain in its success"?
55. What are the two things a prince must rely on for success?
56. What must happen before a new prince can be respected?

Chapter 7

57. What are the two most "constant and unstable thing"?
58. How did Cesare Borgia get his new state?
59. What two things must a prince do before and after establishing/taking over a new state?
60. What two things hindered the duke in holding Romagna?
61. Name the two parties in Rome?
62. How did the Duke win loyalties?
63. Describe the condition of Romagna when the Duke first occupied it?
64. Delineate the four ways the Duke decided to act?
65. Why does Machiavelli absolve the Duke of any blame?
66. Why do men "injure"?
67. Those who believe new _____ cause old _____ to be forgotten deceive _____.

Chapter 8:

68. What cannot be called a "talent"?
69. Explain the reasons for Oliverotto's guilt.
70. A leader who does not commit all his atrocities at once is compelled to...?
71. How should a prince "live among his people"?

Chapter 9:

72. What do the nobles do “seeing they cannot withstand the people”?
73. Why should a prince fear his nobles?
74. What should a prince always guard against?
75. According to Machiavelli, what is it that a prince must be sure to do?
76. What is the principle danger in changing types of government?

Chapter Ten

77. “such princes [should] _____ and _____ their towns.”
78. “it is _____ to keep an army a _____ in the field without being interfered with.”
79. What does Machiavelli say is the nature of men?

Chapter Eleven

80. How are ecclesiastical principalities acquired?
81. How is the ecclesiastical principality different from others?
82. What was the reason the “temporal powers of the pope...were little esteemed in Italy”?
83. What were two things Pope Julius II held firm?

Chapter Twelve

84. What are the two components of a good state?
85. List all the problems with mercenaries.
86. Identify the metaphor that Machiavelli uses for the ease with which Charles seized Italy.
87. Who were the ancient mercenaries?
88. Who was the Florentine’s Captain?
89. Define the term “plebeians.”
90. What was the principle that guided the conquerors?

Chapter Thirteen

91. What happens when a prince either loses or wins with the use of mercenaries and auxiliaries?
92. Explain the most dangerous characteristics of mercenaries and auxiliaries?
93. What was the name given to the Italian Mercenaries?
84. What rhetorical device does Machiavelli use to back up his assertions?
95. Paraphrase Machiavelli’s opinion of Wise men.

Chapter Fourteen

96. What does the study of war do?
97. Because there is _____ between _____ and _____.
98. List the skills that a great leader must acquire.
99. How can imitation bring glory?

Chapter Fifteen

100. Hence it is necessary for a prince wishing to hold his own to _____, and make use of it or not according to _____.
101. According to Machiavelli then, virtue can be abandoned, because if it is followed it can bring about _____.

Chapter Sixteen

102. Machiavelli offers a caveat about being liberal explain all the problems attached to being generous.
103. Explain the wisdom behind being mean.
104. Identify the two cases of generosity that Machiavelli delineates.

105. Why does “liberality” waste quickly?

Chapter Seventeen

106. Princes should be careful to _____ and not mind the _____.

107. Translate Virgil’s Latin verse as per notes in the back of the book and then explain how this relates to Machiavelli’s overarching principal.

108. What is the warning that Machiavelli issues about friendship that has been bought?(76)

109. Machiavelli believes that men will sooner forgive the killing of their fathers than unjustified seizing of property. is this true? Explain your answer.

110. Why was Alexander great?

111. What must a prince avoid?

Chapter Eighteen

112. Who raised Achilles and other princes of old so that they knew how to behave in ways that were half man and half beast?

113. How is Machiavelli’s ideal for human behavior antithetical to Erasmus’s?

114. If, then Machiavelli believes in original sin, what does that mean he believes about all men?

115. What could happen if a person always appeared to have good qualities?

116. What are the five qualities a man should appear to have?

Chapter Nineteen

117. What is it that makes a ruler the most and contemptible?

118. How should a wise ruler defend against internal attacks?

119. How should a wise ruler defend against external attacks?

120. What is the third difficulty that Roman emperors had to put up with?

121. Why did Alexander become despised, and what was the consequences of this?

122. How did Severus punish Albinus?

123. Why was Antonius hated and feared?

124. Why should it have been easy for Commodus to hold the empire?

125. What is it that makes the Turk so strong?

Chapter Twenty

126. List the six ways some princes have tried to securely hold their state.

127. Explain the problems inherent with disarming the new subjects.

128. Explain the problems inherent in encouraging factions.

129. Explain the reasons a prince might want to encourage a weak insurrection against himself.

130. Which type of nobles will a prince find it easier to make friends and why.

131. Explain both the evil and the providence of building a fortress.

Chapter 21:

132. Summarize the deeds of Ferdinand of Aragon, The King of Spain, that made him a good prince.

133. What should be a prince’s primary endeavor?

134. What is the caveat that Machiavelli offers about declaring for one side or another?

135. Explain Machiavelli’s theory about neutrality.

136. What is the importance of decisions made with prudence?

137. How can a prince show his favor?

Chapter 22:

138. Why is it important to make good choices when considering ministers?

139. According to Machiavelli, what are the three kinds of intellect?

140. What kind of man would never make a good servant?

141. What is the most important quality in a servant?

Chapter 23:

142. According to Machiavelli, what is the best way to avoid flatterers?

143. Paraphrase the specific example Machiavelli uses to illustrate his principle.

144. What skill should a prince avoid when asking for advice?

Chapter 24:

145. What will all the previous suggestions enable a prince to do?

146. What happened to Philip of Macedon?

147. What is usually responsible for a prince's downfall?

Chapter 25:

148. What do most men believe controls their fortune?

149. What is the effect of Machiavelli's analogy?

150. What is the secret to success for a prince?

151. It is better to be _____ than _____.

Chapter 26:

Now that you are used to the way Machiavelli writes, summarize this chapter. Make sure you include all the main ideas, and enough details to make sense. Do not forget that Machiavelli always has some didactic purpose, and you must identify this and explain it within the text of the summary.