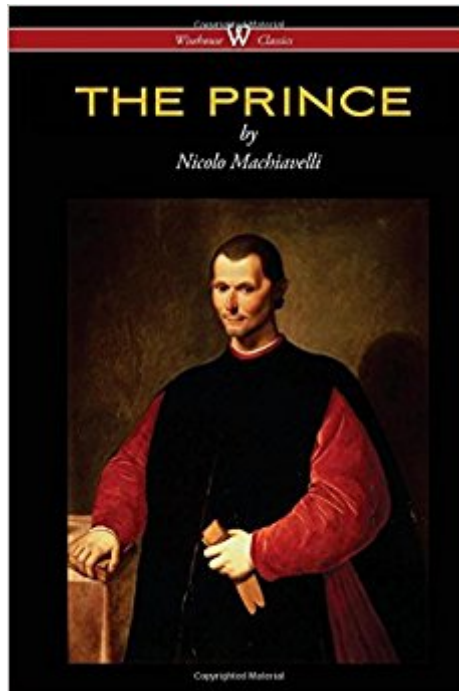




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THE PRINCE (Wisehouse Classics Edition)



Synopsis

THE PRINCE (Italian: *Il Principe*) is a 16th-century political treatise by the Italian diplomat and political theorist Niccolò Machiavelli. From correspondence a version appears to have been distributed in 1513, using a Latin title, *De Principatibus* (About Principalities). However, the printed version was not published until 1532, five years after Machiavelli's death. This was done with the permission of the Medici pope Clement VII, but "long before then, in fact since the first appearance of the Prince in manuscript, controversy had swirled about his writings". Although it was written as if it were a traditional work in the mirrors for princes style, it is generally agreed that it was especially innovative. This is only partly because it was written in the vernacular Italian rather than Latin, a practice which had become increasingly popular since the publication of Dante's *Divine Comedy* and other works of Renaissance literature. THE PRINCE is sometimes claimed to be one of the first works of modern philosophy, especially modern political philosophy, in which the effective truth is taken to be more important than any abstract ideal. It was also in direct conflict with the dominant Catholic and scholastic doctrines of the time concerning how to consider politics and ethics. Although it is relatively short, the treatise is the most remembered of Machiavelli's works and the one most responsible for bringing the word "Machiavellian" into usage as a pejorative. It also helped make "Old Nick" an English term for the devil, and even contributed to the modern negative connotations of the words "politics" and "politician" in western countries. In terms of subject matter it overlaps with the much longer *Discourses on Livy*, which was written a few years later. In its use of near-contemporary Italians as examples of people who perpetrated criminal deeds for politics, another lesser-known work by Machiavelli which THE PRINCE has been compared to is the *Life of Castruccio Castracani*. The descriptions within THE PRINCE have the general theme of accepting that the aims of princes-such as glory and survival-can justify the use of immoral means to achieve those ends: "He who neglects what is done for what ought to be done, sooner effects his ruin than his preservation."

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Customer Reviews

Politicians usually read this text in the first political science class which they take. Actually, understanding Politics without understanding the principles in this text is an impossibility. A person who does not understand the principles of this text is too naive to understand why their leaders do what they do. Politics occurs in business, family life, and other settings, as well as government; Machiavelli's rules may be applied in all of these. Though living by these rules isn't necessary, a successful politician must act with mindfulness of their implications, or face failure. Considering the far reaching implications of Machiavelli's thought, one might wonder why elementary school children do not study "the Prince." Many people don't have the guts to face what Machiavelli says. He presents the rules of 'hardball' politics; the only time that he mentions morality is when he describes the occasions in which a leader may need to fake it. Politicians have become so adept in following these rules that those whom they lead will often take offense at the suggestion that their leaders live by them. Read this book and understand the daily news. "The Prince" is the quintessential text of Political Science. The Dover edition, though small, does not lack any of the original text. It does lack the clutter of scholarly commentaries. It belongs on the shelf of anyone interested in the politics which impacts their life, but it will merely irritate the gullible

Machiavelli wrote this book for the Medici back in a time that is supposed to be so different from today. Yet, The Prince is as applicable as the day it was wrote- maybe more so. It's a concise, almost surgical, guidebook to world domination. Superficially, this book is written like stereo instructions with precise directions on control of your enemies, followers, and friends. But, deeply, it will force any serious reader to take stock of the lengths necessary to attain great power. Lives are flited at like pieces on a chess board with absolutely no unnecessary concern (if they can't hurt ya, screw 'em). Why, aside from that whole learning about world domination thing, this book is such a necessary read for anybody with a stake in daily life is because this is the book your leaders sleep with under their pillow. There hasn't been an intelligent, powerful, and influential political leader that hasn't been influenced by Machiavelli and this book. It's very important to really wrap yourself

around reality in reading this book so as to open your own eyes to what people do to lead (not just dictators, fascists, and imperialists, but democrats and republicans.). This book is Political Reality 101- you must read it.

Machiavelli's brilliant text (I read the N. H. Thomson translation, in the Dover Thrift edition) is sometimes disturbing, but ultimately brilliant in its analysis as to the achievement of political power. His arguments are rational and succinct, and it amazed me how relevant all this was to today's political landscape! Who could have thought that a document nearly 500 years old would survive and remain important.

Bought this for my 13 year old son doing a book report on politics, when all his peers were reading books written in the last twenty years by all the political rogues and "players" of our time. I was a little concerned that Machiavelli might be a little over my son's head, but it reads well after getting used to the cadence of the author. The book arrived with a small dent in the cover. The dust jacket is too small and fragile, but it is more of a wrapper than a dust jacket, so no points off for that issue. This book has a wonderful introduction making the 15th century dialog and 1910 English translation by Ninian Hill Thomson much easier to understand. The typeface is a clean sans-serif of some type, with good white space on the 5"x8" pages.

An excellent edition! Machiavelli is famous, or infamous, for shifting the sense of "virtue" from moral worth to effectiveness. The virtuous figures of The Prince are those who do whatever it takes to seize and maintain foreign territory, even if it entails the grossest violations. This is a morality, if that's the right word, of ends. Now, was Machiavelli arguing for this or merely offering his prince a value-neutral how-to manual for rule? That's a question the book doesn't answer. The slender political treatise is one of the most influential and controversial books published in Western literature. Critics have long debated whether The Prince, which famously argues that the ends "no matter how immoral" justify the means for preserving political authority, was written as a satire, or as British philosopher and Nobel laureate Bertrand Russell once said, as "a handbook for gangsters." While Machiavelli's intent is unknown, this much is indisputable: the book continues to be a searing meditation on the means some people use to get and maintain power.

I picked this up because it is referenced in a lot of books I have been reading lately. I had attempted to read this a few years back but not really appreciated it enough or had the right frame of

mind to complete it at that time. I found it witty and at times funny.

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