

M.A. ENGLISH

SEMESTER II

PAPER

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Study material on The Prince

MCQs:

1. Where was Machiavelli born?

Spain

France

Italy

Germany

2. According to Machiavelli, which of the following statements about hereditary states is not valid?

Subjects naturally love the ruling family

They should retain traditional institutions

Their traditional institutions should be adapted to current events

They are more difficult to control than new states

3. Which of the following is a course of action that should not be taken by a prince of a new principality?

Change the laws and taxes

Punish insurrection

Destroy the family of the former prince

Establish settlements

4. Which of the following is the best means of becoming a prince?

Constitution

Fortune

Crime

Prowess

5. Which of the following arguments does Machiavelli make about the nature of men?

They are naturally deceitful

They are naturally conflict-prone

They are naturally dissatisfied

They are naturally incompetent

6. Which of the following is true about nobles and ministers?

It is easier to take over a state run by nobles, and easier to hold onto a state run by ministers  
It is harder to take over a state run by nobles, and easier to hold onto a state run by ministers

It is harder to take over a state run by ministers, and easier to hold onto a state run by nobles

It is easier to take over a state run by nobles, and easier to hold onto a state run by nobles

7. Which of the following is a course of action that a prince should not take in order to hold states accustomed to living freely under their own laws?

Live there in person

Devastate towns and villages

Bribe local officials

Set up an oligarchy

8. Which is of the following is true about fortune and prowess?

Acquiring a state by prowess is hard, maintaining it is easy

Acquiring a state by fortune is hard, maintaining it is easy

Acquiring a state by fortune is hard, maintaining it is hard

Acquiring a state by prowess is hard, maintaining it is hard

9. What is Machiavelli's approach to the use of cruelty?

Inflict all the cruelty at once, then never again

Inflict small amounts of cruelty consistently

Never inflict cruelty at all

Inflict cruelty suddenly and unpredictably

10. Under what conditions are fortresses most valuable?

If they prevent rebel insurrections

If they prevent enemies from invading

If they prevent citizens from hating the prince

If they prevent mercenaries from pillaging

11. Which if the following is not true about ecclesiastical principalities?

They can be possessed by a prince

They are maintained by divine power

They can be ruled by a prince

They have happy citizens

12. Which of the following types of troops should a prince depend on?

Auxiliary troops

Native troops

Mercenary troops

Mixed troops

13. Which of the following statements about auxiliary troops is not true?

They fight well

They are skilled and organized

Their first loyalty is to another ruler

They are just as dangerous as mercenaries

14. With which of the following statements would Machiavelli not agree?

The only way to lose a state is by neglecting the art of war

Good armies stem from good laws

Italy has been overly dependent on mercenaries

Auxiliary troops are useful in prosperous times

15. Which of the following traits is most desirable in a prince?

Parsimony

Generosity

Trustworthiness

Compassion

16. Against whom might a prince be justified in using inhumane cruelty?

Against rebels

Against criminals

Against troops

Against commoners

17. To what does Machiavelli compare a prince who breaks his word to play one foreign power off another?

A trap

A wolf

A lion

A fox

18. What quality in a prince will cause the populace to despise him?

Effeminacy

Miserliness

Stubbornness

Impulsiveness

19. What is the best defence against conspiracies?

Popular support

Loyal ministers

A strong army

Foreign allies

20. Which of the following is not a means of winning honour and prestige?

Embarking on military campaigns

Declaring neutrality in a conflict

Throwing city-wide festivals

Exhibiting outstanding ability

21. What is the mark of the best kind of intellect?

The ability to explain things to others

The ability to understand things for themselves

The ability to understand the explanations of others

The ability to guess the understanding of others

22. What is Machiavelli's historical assessment of Italy's past princes?

Mostly bad luck despite good ruling

Mostly bad ruling combined with a little bad luck Mostly

bad ruling despite good luck

Mostly bad luck combined with a little bad ruling

23. Which of the following is foremost among Machiavelli's pleas to Lorenzo de' Medici?

The need to rebuild Italy's military strength

The need to rebuild Italy's national infrastructure

The need to rebuild Italy's national pride

The need to rebuild Italy's alliances with foreign powers

24. Which of the following rulers is not an example of a ruler who triumphed on the strength of their own powers?

Theseus

Moses

Cyrus

Cesare Borgia

25. Why had a number of Italian princes of Machiavelli's time recently lost their states?

Malignant acts of God

Plague

Their own military faults

The invasion of brutal Mongol hordes

### **About Machiavelli**

Niccolò Machiavelli was born on May 3, 1469, in Florence, Italy, and passed his childhood peacefully, receiving the humanistic education customary for young men of the Renaissance middle class. He also spent two years studying business mathematics, then worked for the next seven years in Rome for a Florentine banker. After returning to Florence in 1494, he witnessed the expulsion of the Medici family, oligarchic despots who had ruled Florence for decades, and the rise of Girolamo Savanorola, a Dominican religious zealot who took control of the region shortly thereafter.

## **Theme of The Prince**

Machiavelli believes that good laws follow naturally from a good military. His famous statement that “the presence of sound military forces indicates the presence of sound laws” describes the relationship between developing states and war in *The Prince*. Machiavelli reverses the conventional understanding of war as a necessary, but not definitive, element of the development of states, and instead asserts that successful war is the very foundation upon which all states are built. Much of *The Prince* is devoted to describing exactly what it means to conduct a good war: how to effectively fortify a city, how to treat subjects in newly acquired territories, and how to prevent domestic insurrection that would distract from a successful war. But Machiavelli’s description of war encompasses more than just the direct use of military force—it comprises international diplomacy, domestic politics, tactical strategy, geographic mastery, and historical analysis. Within the context of Machiavelli’s Italy—when cities were constantly threatened by neighbouring principalities and the area had suffered through power struggles for many years—his method of viewing almost all affairs of state through a military lens was a timely innovation in political thinking.

## **Qualities of The Prince**

Machiavelli defines virtues as qualities that are praised by others, such as generosity, compassion, and piety. He argues that a prince should always try to appear virtuous, but that acting virtuously for virtue’s sake can prove detrimental to the principality. A prince should not necessarily avoid vices such as cruelty or dishonesty if employing them will benefit the state. Cruelty and other vices should not be pursued for their own sake, just as virtue should not be pursued for its own sake: virtues and vices should be conceived as means to an end. Every action the prince takes must be considered in light of its effect on the state, not in terms of its intrinsic moral value.

## **Role of Free Will**

Machiavelli often uses the words “prowess” and “fortune” to describe two distinct ways in which a prince can come to power. “Prowess” refers to an individual’s talents, while “fortune” implies chance or luck. Part of



Machiavelli's aim in writing *The Prince* is to investigate how much of a prince's success or failure is caused by his own free will and how much is determined by nature or the environment in which he lives. Machiavelli applies this question specifically to the failure of past Italian princes. In Chapter XXV, Machiavelli discusses the role of fortune in determining human affairs. He attempts to compromise between free will and determinism by arguing that fortune controls half of human actions and leaves the other half to free will. However, Machiavelli also argues that through foresight—a quality that he champions throughout the book—people can shield themselves against fortune's vicissitudes. Thus, Machiavelli can be described as confident in the power of human beings to shape their destinies to a degree, but equally confident that human control over events is never absolute.

### **The Prince – A Philosophical Treatise**

The most revolutionary aspect of *The Prince* is its separation of politics and ethics. Classical political theory traditionally linked political law with a higher, moral law. In contrast, Machiavelli argues that political action must always be considered in light of its practical consequences rather than some lofty ideal.

Another striking feature of *The Prince* is that it is far less theoretical than the literature on political theory that preceded it. Many earlier thinkers had constructed hypothetical notions of ideal or natural states, but Machiavelli treated historical evidence pragmatically to ground *The Prince* in real situations. The book is dedicated to the current ruler of Florence, and it is readily apparent that Machiavelli intends for his advice to be taken seriously by the powerful men of his time. It is a practical guide for a ruler rather than an abstract treatise of philosophy.

### **Image of the fox and the lion in The prince**

Machiavelli uses the metaphor of the fox and the lion to explain the combination of cunning and strength that a prince must possess in order to maintain control of his state. Machiavelli stresses that a prince must learn how to imitate both the fox and the lion so that he may draw on the necessary attributes of these "beasts" when circumstances demand it. According to Machiavelli, a prudent ruler must adapt to new situations and problems, acting as a fox "in order to recognize traps" and as a lion when he must "frighten off

wolves." Machiavelli argues that the lion "is defenceless against traps" while the fox "is defenceless against wolves" and other physical threats; therefore, a prince must mimic the behaviour of both types of beasts in order to benefit from their complementary talents and to overcome their differing weaknesses. As a fox, the prince can use cunning statecraft and diplomacy to sidestep traps and other pitfalls. As a lion, the prince can use physical force in order to maintain his power over his subjects and enemies. Taken individually, neither of these talents will spell a prince's success; but combined, the diversified skillset – political cunning backed by the threat of physical force – is formidable. The fox and the lion represent a meeting of opposites and a wise ruler will strive to master and combine the unique skills of both beasts