

# Niccolo Machiavelli: The Prince [quotes], 1513

---

*Niccolo Machiavelli, a diplomat in the pay of the Republic of Florence, wrote The Prince in 1513 after the overthrow of the Republic forced him into exile. It is widely regarded as one of the basic texts of Western political science, and represents a basic change in the attitude and image of government.*

---

- A prince never lacks legitimate reasons to break his promise. \_\_\_\_\_
- A return to first principles in a republic is sometimes caused by the simple virtues of one man. His good example has such an influence that the good men strive to imitate him, and the wicked are ashamed to lead a life so contrary to his example. \_\_\_\_\_
- A wise ruler ought never to keep faith when by doing so it would be against his interests.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Before all else, be armed. \_\_\_\_\_
- Benefits should be conferred gradually; and in that way they will taste better \_\_\_\_\_
- Hatred is gained as much by good works as by evil. \_\_\_\_\_
- He who wishes to be obeyed must know how to command. \_\_\_\_\_
- I'm not interested in preserving the status quo; I want to overthrow it. \_\_\_\_\_
- It is better to be feared than loved, if you cannot be both. \_\_\_\_\_
- It is necessary for him who lays out a state and arranges laws for it to presuppose that all men are evil and that they are always going to act according to the wickedness of their spirits whenever they have free scope.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- It is not titles that honor men, but men that honor titles. \_\_\_\_\_
- Men are so simple and so much inclined to obey immediate needs that a deceiver will never lack victims for his deceptions. \_\_\_\_\_
- Men rise from one ambition to another: first, they seek to secure themselves against attack, and then they attack others. \_\_\_\_\_
- One change always leaves the way open for the establishment of others.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Princes and governments are far more dangerous than other elements within society.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Tardiness often robs us opportunity, and the dispatch of our forces. \_\_\_\_\_
- The first method for estimating the intelligence of a ruler is to look at the men he has around him.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- The main foundations of every state, new states as well as ancient or composite ones, are good laws and good arms you cannot have good laws without good arms, and where there are good arms, good laws inevitably follow. \_\_\_\_\_
- The new ruler must determine all the injuries that he will need to inflict. He must inflict them once and for all. \_\_\_\_\_
- There are three kinds of intelligence: one kind understands things for itself, the other appreciates what others can understand, the third understands neither for itself nor through others. This first kind is excellent, the second good, and the third kind useless. \_\_\_\_\_
- There is no avoiding war; it can only be postponed to the advantage of others.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- To understand the nature of the people one must be a prince, and to understand the nature of the prince, one must be of the people. \_\_\_\_\_
- Whoever conquers a free town and does not demolish it commits a great error and may expect to be ruined himself. \_\_\_\_\_
- Whosoever desires constant success must change his conduct with the times. \_\_\_\_\_