The Prince

(Italian: Il Principe, Latin: De Principatibus)

The Prince	
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Language	Italian
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The cover by the 1550 edition

Preceded by	Followed by
Discourses on Livy	Discourses on Livy

The Prince (Italian: Il Principe; Latin: De Principatibus) is a political treatise by the Renaissance humanist and political philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli, written in 1513 and dedicated to Lorenzo de' Medici. It focuses primarily on how a prince should gain and maintain power, and contains many maxims and observations on the character of a ruler, such as "fortune favors the bold" and "it is better to be feared than loved if one cannot be both". It is Machiavelli's most famous work, and has been the subject of much scrutiny and controversy since its publication, because it departs from the classical and Christian tradition of political philosophy by its amoral character, and because it is addressed to a real ruler, rather than to a philosopher or a fellow citizen. The book was written during a period of political turmoil in Italy, and was intended to gain the attention of Lorenzo de' Medici, the ruler of Florence, in the hope that he would read it and be impressed by it, so that Machiavelli could be employed by the Medici family in a political capacity. However, Machiavelli's hopes were not fulfilled, and he was imprisoned and tortured by the Medici family in 1513 but was released after being imprisoned for a month. The book was not published until after Machiavelli's death in 1532, and was dedicated to Lorenzo's brother, Giuliano de' Medici, who was the ruler of Florence at the time of publication. The work circulated among the educated elite of Italy, and was quickly banned by the Catholic Church and placed on its Index of Forbidden Books in 1559. The book had a profound influence on political thinkers and rulers throughout Europe, including Henry VIII of England, who is said to have read it every night before he went to sleep, and Elizabeth I, who translated it into English. Machiavelli also ignored the classical distinction between the good and corrupt forms, for example between monarchy and tyranny, or aristocracy and oligarchy, in the analysis, arguing that all principalities are either hereditary or new, and that all republics are either free or corrupt.[1]

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Summary [edit]

Each part of The Prince has been extensively commented on over centuries. The work has a recognizable structure, the main plot indicated by the author himself. It can be summarized as follows:

Letter to Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino

Machiavelli presents his work as a Mirror for Princes, in the tradition of Plato, Xenophon, Cicero, Plutarch, Seneca, Boethius, Dante, Petrarch, Erasmus.

The author's letter: from Philosophers Chapters 1 and 15

The Prince starts by describing the subject matter of all models. In the first sentence, Machiavelli uses the word "stato" (Italian: state), which could also mean "status" or "estate", or even "condition", "position", "posture", "attitude", "state of affairs", "state of mind", "state of the union", "state of the nation", "state of the art", "state of the world", "state of mind", "state of affairs

- A Lecture by Ian Johnston on *The Prince* as satire
- Interview with Quentin Skinner on *The Prince*

V·T·E	**Niccolò Machiavelli**	[show]
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