

# The Prince

## Reading Assignment

Read one or more of these chapters from *The Prince*, thinking about the argument Machiavelli is making. Do you agree with the author? Why or why not? Think of specific examples or reasons for your position.

- Chapter 1: Explains the premise that there are only two types of Government: republics and principedoms. Only one paragraph long, debate the premise.
- Chapter 9: Explains how a Prince should behave if he takes over a republic. Debate whether power should rest on the people or the ruling class.
- Chapter 10: Explains the best way to defend a state from outside attack. Debate whether a prince should defend the entire country or only the cities and strongholds.
- Chapter 16: A prince can be either miserly or liberal (economically speaking) and which he is depends on circumstances. Debate the statement that a Prince should be liberal with other people's property.
- Chapter 17: A prince has to choose between being feared and being loved. Debate which the Prince should choose (or debate the premise, does the Prince really have to choose and are these the only two choices?)
- Chapter 18: A prince should keep his promises only when it is convenient. Debate whether this is so.
- Chapter 23: Only a very few people should be allowed to speak freely with criticism of the prince or with advice to the Prince. Debate whether this rule applies in a republic as well as in a Principedom.

## Logical Fallacies

As you think about your arguments keep in mind these logical fallacies. Good debaters either avoid them or use them purposefully to sway opinion in their direction. They also take note when their opponent used them so they can be counteracted or called out.

- Appeal to Law: Law is touted as a moral authority
- False dilemma: Where only two possible choices are admitted when in fact there are more.
- Is-ought Problem: because something is therefore it ought to be
- Naturalistic: because something is natural or pleasant or common it is therefore right

- Negative Proof Fallacy: if a premise or conclusion cannot be proven right it must be wrong or vice versa
- Proof by example: because one example can be found therefore this applies to all
- Red herring: a speaker introduces a new topic to avoid discussing the first
- Ad hominum: attacking the person instead of the argument
- Argumentum ad Populum: an argument is true because so many people believe it to be true
- Appeal to emotion: Emotional responses rather than logic are used to “win” an argument
- Chronological snobbery: The present is more advanced or more enlightened than the past

## **Debate**

Prepare for a debate on one of these topics, as chosen by the teacher or the class. Make note cards that highlight your major points. Practice saying your arguments out loud before the debate. Carefully chose your words and practice your body language and voice.

Take time to think about what arguments the other side might make and how you will answer them.

Hold a debate with a moderator who asks questions and times the responses of the debators.