

10.4.3

Lesson 1

Introduction

In this first lesson of Unit 3, students explore Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince* by considering the first two paragraphs of chapter 17: "Of cruelty and mercy, and whether it is better to be loved than to be feared or the contrary" (from "Turning to the other qualities mentioned above" to "a dread of punishment that will never abandon you"), in which Machiavelli discusses the virtues of being feared and loved. In this unit, students explore a nonfiction text that examines one author's thoughts about the traits that contribute to successful rulers. To scaffold their engagement with Machiavelli, students recall the work they did with *Macbeth*, a fictional account of how a ruler's traits contribute to his downfall.

In this lesson, students grapple with how some of the many references Machiavelli uses in his writing support central ideas and how Machiavelli relates various central ideas in the text. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: What specific details reveal a central idea in paragraphs 1–2 of chapter 17?

For homework, students continue their Accountable Independent Reading (AIR). They also read the first paragraph of the Dedicatory Letter of *The Prince* in order to identify Machiavelli's point of view in this text.

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RI.9-10.2	Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
Addressed Standard(s)	
W.9-10.9.b	<p>Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p> <p>b. Apply <i>grades 9–10 Reading standards</i> to literary nonfiction (e.g., "Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning").</p>

Assessment

Assessment(s)

The learning in this lesson will be captured through a Quick Write at the end of the lesson. Students will respond to the following prompt:

- What specific details reveal a central idea in paragraphs 1–2 of chapter 17?

① Throughout this unit, Quick Writes will be evaluated using the Short Response Rubric.

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Identify a central idea in the passage (e.g., it is better to be feared than loved).
- Select specific details from the passage that support the central idea (e.g., a prince should not be concerned about appearing cruel; fear motivates loyalty; a few examples of cruelty versus mercy: Cesare Borgia, who “brought order to the Romagna,” (paragraph 1) can have more compassionate results than “excessive mercy,” as demonstrated by the Florentines, who “allowed the destruction of Pistoia” (paragraph 1); etc.).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- contrary (n.) – an opposite or different fact, event, or situation
- Florentine (adj.) – of Florence, a city in Italy
- fickle (adj.) – changing often
- simulators (n.) – people who pretend

Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)

- restored (v.) – gave back, returned
- infamy (n.) – extremely bad reputation
- prudence (n.) – careful good judgment that allows someone to avoid danger or risks
- insufferable (adj.) – very bad or unpleasant; too unpleasant to deal with or accept
- lacking (adj.) – not having any or enough of something that is needed or wanted
- wretched (adj.) – very bad or unpleasant
- sustained (v.) – kept from giving way

Additional vocabulary to support English Language Learners (to provide directly)

- prince (n.) – a male ruler in some countries
- merciful (adj.) – treating people with kindness and forgiveness
- cruel (adj.) – causing or helping to cause suffering
- execution (n.) – the act of killing someone, especially as punishment for a crime

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards: RI.9-10.2, W.9-10.9.b • Text: <i>The Prince</i> by Niccolò Machiavelli, Chapter 17: “Of cruelty and mercy, and whether it is better to be loved than to be feared or the contrary” 	
Learning Sequence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda 2. Homework Accountability 3. Masterful Reading 4. Reading and Discussion 5. Quick Write 6. Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5% 2. 10% 3. 10 % 4. 55% 5. 15% 6. 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist (refer to 10.4.1 Lesson 1)

Learning Sequence

How to Use the Learning Sequence	
Symbol	Type of Text & Interpretation of the Symbol
10%	Percentage indicates the percentage of lesson time each activity should take.
no symbol	Plain text indicates teacher action.
	Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.
	<i>Italicized text indicates a vocabulary word.</i>
►	Indicates student action(s).
☞	Indicates possible student response(s) to teacher questions.
ⓘ	Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.

Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda

5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standard for this lesson: RI.9-10.2. Remind students that in 10.4.2 they read Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, a work of fiction in which the title character's traits contributed to his role as a leader and to his downfall. In this unit, students read several excerpts of Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince*, a nonfiction text that explores Machiavelli's beliefs about the characteristics of an effective ruler. In this lesson, students read and discuss the first two paragraphs of chapter 17 of *The Prince*, examining how various qualities impact a prince's ability to rule, and noticing how Machiavelli introduces and develops a central idea.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

Instruct students to form pairs to share the vocabulary words they identified and defined for the previous lesson's homework.

- 💬 Students may identify the following words: *restored*, *infamy*, *prudence*, *insufferable*, *lacking*, *wretched*, *sustained*.

① Definitions are provided in the Vocabulary box in this lesson.

Activity 3: Masterful Reading

10%

Have students listen to a masterful reading of chapter 17 of *The Prince* (from "Turning to the other qualities mentioned above" to "only he must seek to avoid being hated, as I have said"). Instruct students to listen for words and phrases Machiavelli uses to describe a successful prince.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posting or projecting the following guiding question to support students in their reading:

What makes a good prince?

- ▶ Students follow along, reading silently.

Activity 4: Reading and Discussion

55%

Instruct students to form small groups. Post or project each set of questions below for students to discuss.

Instruct student groups to reread paragraph 1 of chapter 17 (from “Turning to the other qualities mentioned above” to “nor too much suspicion render him insufferable”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

- ① These groups will be used throughout the unit.
- ① Consider asking students to number the sentences in paragraph 1 for ease of discussion.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definitions: *prince* means “a male ruler in some countries,” *cruel* means “causing or helping to cause suffering,” and *merciful* means “treating people with kindness and forgiveness.”
 - ▶ Students write the definition of *prince*, *cruel*, and *merciful* on their copy of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

Based on the title of chapter 17, what central ideas can you infer Machiavelli will develop?

- 💬 Student responses should include:
 - Machiavelli will develop the idea of whether it is better to be merciful or cruel.
 - Machiavelli will consider whether it is better to be loved or feared.
- ① If students struggle to answer this question, provide the following definition: *contrary* means “an opposite or different fact, event, or situation.”

Remind students to annotate their texts for central idea, using the code CI. Explain to students that annotating will help them keep track of evidence they will use later in lesson assessments and the End-of-Unit Assessment, which focuses on central idea.

- ① This focused annotation supports students’ engagement with W.9-10.9.b, which addresses the use of textual evidence in writing.

What is the relationship between the first paragraph of chapter 17 and the title of the text, *The Prince*?

- 💬 Student responses may include:
 - Machiavelli talks about what a prince “must” and “must not” do in this paragraph.
 - Machiavelli gives special attention to “the new prince.”

What evidence does Machiavelli provide in the third sentence of the first paragraph of chapter 17 to support his claim that a prince “must take care not to use...mercy badly”?

- 💬 Machiavelli uses the example of the Florentines, who wanted to appear merciful and ended up allowing the destruction of a city (sentence 3).

- ① Remind students of the work they did with explanatory notes in 10.4.2. Instruct students to refer to the explanatory notes for additional information about places, people, and events. Point out the map of northern and central Italy (c. 1500) facing the title page, the Explanatory Notes on pages 91–113, and the Glossary of Proper Names on pages 114–130.
- ① If students struggle to answer this question, provide the following definition: *Florentines* means “citizens of Florence, a city in Italy.”

How does Machiavelli’s statement that “a prince must not worry about the infamy of being considered cruel” (sentence 4) relate to the first sentence?

- 💬 The fourth sentence means that a prince must not worry about being considered cruel, especially if he is being cruel so that he can keep his subjects “united and loyal.” This seems to contradict the first sentence, that states, “[E]very prince must desire to be considered merciful and not cruel.”

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle with this question, consider posing the following question:

How does the phrase “a prince must not worry” help you to make meaning of *infamy* in sentence 4?

- 💬 People worry about things that are dangerous or harmful in some way, so *infamy* must be something negative.

Confirm that the word *infamy* means “extremely bad reputation.”

Paraphrase the claim Machiavelli makes in the fifth sentence of chapter 17, paragraph 1.

- 💬 A few examples of cruelty that harm a small number of individuals can sometimes enable a prince to be more merciful than a prince who refuses to be cruel and allows a large number of individuals to suffer as a result.

How does Machiavelli support this claim in chapter 17, paragraph 1?

- 💬 Student responses should include:
 - Machiavelli says that a few examples of cruelty could prevent “disorders,” which lead to “murders and plundering,” meaning that a few extreme punishments for crimes will set an example that will keep people from committing similar crimes that harm society.
 - Machiavelli says that “executions ordered by the prince injure specific individuals,” but the disorder caused by “excessive mercy...usually injure[s] the entire community,” meaning that an execution might seem harsh, but it kills only one person. Allowing a criminal or traitor to

live might be showing “excessive mercy” because it does not discourage people from committing crimes that will harm many people in the community.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider asking the following questions.

How does Machiavelli’s description of how Cesare Borgia “brought order to the Romagna” (in the second sentence of paragraph 1) help explain what Machiavelli means by the term “disorder” in the fifth sentence?

💬 In the second sentence Machiavelli describes Borgia’s bringing order to the Romagna as “unit[ing] it, and restor[ing] it to peace and loyalty.” He must mean that “disorder” has to do with the opposite: division, unrest, and disloyalty.

How does the end of the fifth sentence of paragraph 1 (“With a very few examples of cruelty...executions ordered by the prince injure specific individuals”) help explain what Machiavelli means by “excessive mercy” in this sentence?

💬 The end of the sentence mentions “disorders,” including “murders and plundering” that can result from “excessive mercy.” “Excessive mercy” might mean an unwillingness to punish people for serious crimes for fear of not being considered “merciful” (or of being considered “cruel”).

What example of “cruelty” does Machiavelli use in this sentence?

💬 Machiavelli uses “executions ordered by the prince” as an example of cruelty.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider pointing out that the word *execution* means “the act of killing someone, especially as a punishment for a crime” and is the noun form of the verb *to execute*.

In the first paragraph of chapter 17, how does Machiavelli use evidence from history and literature to support his claim that “[w]ith a very few examples of cruelty, [the prince] will prove more compassionate” than those who exhibit “excessive mercy”?

💬 Student responses should include:

- Machiavelli uses the example of Cesare Borgia, who “was considered cruel” but brought “order to the Romagna” (sentence 2). This example supports Machiavelli’s claim because it shows that cruelty had the “compassionate” effect of bringing peace. If Borgia had not been “considered cruel” and had instead tried to show “excessive mercy,” the Romagna would have continued to suffer from political unrest.
- Machiavelli uses the example of Dido, a new queen, who “set guards” over her land in order to protect it from “the harshness of things” during the “newness” of her reign (sentence 7). This example supports Machiavelli’s claim because it shows that the “cruelty” of “set[ting] guards” over Dido’s land had the compassionate result of protecting it from “the harshness

of things.” If Dido had shown “excessive mercy” her country would have suffered, so she would not be showing compassion for her people.

According to Machiavelli, what can a prince accomplish when he is “considered cruel”?

💬 Student responses may include:

- Machiavelli says that a prince who is “considered cruel” can be like Cesare Borgia, who “brought order” to his region, “united it, and restored it to peace and loyalty” (sentence 2).
- A prince who is considered cruel can keep “his subjects united and loyal” (sentence 4).

Based on the evidence in the first paragraph of chapter 17, what does Machiavelli believe about the qualities of mercy and cruelty in a prince?

💬 Student responses should include:

- Machiavelli believes it is better for a prince “to be considered merciful and not cruel” (paragraph 1).
- Machiavelli believes it is possible for a prince to be too merciful or to use mercy “badly,” meaning that a prince who is afraid to set “a very few examples of cruelty” may allow disorder and a prince who is too eager “to avoid being considered cruel” can lead to “destruction” (paragraph 1).
- Machiavelli believes that through “a very few examples of cruelty,” a prince can “prove more compassionate” than if he shows “excessive mercy,” because those examples can prevent “disorders” that “injure the entire community” (paragraph 1).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion based on student responses.

Instruct student groups to read paragraph 2 of chapter 17 (from “From this arises an argument: whether it is better to be loved” to “a dread of punishment that will never abandon you”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the following definitions: *fickle* means “changing often” and *simulators* means “people who pretend.”

① Students may be familiar with some of these words. Consider asking students to volunteer definitions before providing them to the class.

- ▶ Students write the definitions of *fickle* and *simulators* on their copy of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

What does Machiavelli believe is the answer to the argument of “whether it is better to be loved than to be feared” (paragraph 2)?

- In the second sentence of paragraph 2 Machiavelli says it is best “to be both one and the other,” but since it is “difficult to be both together” than the safer option is to be feared.

How does Machiavelli use reasoning to support his claim about “whether it is better to be loved than to be feared” (paragraph 2)?

- Machiavelli says that that a relationship of love will be insincere and easily broken because men are “ungrateful, fickle, simulators and deceivers” (paragraph 2), while a relationship of fear will be strong, because “a dread of punishment...will never abandon you” (paragraph 2).

① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle to reach this understanding, consider asking the following scaffolding questions:

According to Machiavelli, what is the basis of love?

- Machiavelli says “a chain of obligation” is the basis of love (paragraph 2).

According to Machiavelli, what is the basis of fear?

- Machiavelli says “a dread of punishment” is the basis of fear (paragraph 2).

What is the relationship between Machiavelli’s advice in the second paragraph and his advice in the first paragraph?

- In both instances Machiavelli first seems to give one answer, but then he goes on to say something that seems to contradict the answer he gave initially. For example, in the first paragraph, after saying that a prince should work “to be considered merciful,” Machiavelli demonstrates why, for a prince, it is not necessary to “worry about the infamy of being considered cruel” (paragraph 1). In the second paragraph Machiavelli first says that a prince should be “both” loved and feared, but then goes on to explain why “it is much safer to be feared than to be loved” (paragraph 2).

How does Machiavelli’s advice regarding “cruelty and mercy, and whether it is better to be loved than to be feared” relate to *Macbeth*?

- Student responses may include:
 - Duncan used cruelty to keep his subjects loyal when he executed Cawdor and gave the title to Macbeth, but he was not feared enough and Macbeth broke “the chain of obligation” for his “own self-interest” (paragraph 2) and killed Duncan to gain the crown.

- Duncan's friendship with Macbeth was acquired by "a price" (the title of Thane of Cawdor) and so was easily broken (paragraph 2).
- Macbeth's actions demonstrate Machiavelli's belief that men "are ungrateful, fickle, simulators and deceivers...and greedy for gain" (paragraph 2).
- Macbeth did not "desire to be considered merciful" and as a result of his excessive cruelty, he was hated and he lost the crown (paragraph 1).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 5: Quick Write

15%

Instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

What specific details reveal a central idea in paragraphs 1–2 of chapter 17?

Instruct students to look at their annotations to find evidence. Ask students to use this lesson's vocabulary wherever possible in their written responses, and to practice using specific language and domain-specific vocabulary. Remind students to use the Short Response Rubric and Checklist to guide their written responses.

- ▶ Students listen and read the Quick Write prompt.

① Display the prompt for students to see, or provide the prompt in hard copy.

Transition to the independent Quick Write.

- ▶ Students independently answer the prompt, using evidence from the text.
- 🗨 See the High Performance Response at the beginning of this lesson.

Activity 6: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to read the first paragraph of the Dedicatory Letter of *The Prince*, from "In most instances it is customary for those" through "to know the nature of princes well one must be of the people," and respond to the following question:

How does this letter reveal Machiavelli's point of view in *The Prince*?

① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students need additional support, distribute the scaffolding questions from the Differentiation Consideration in 10.4.3 Lesson 2's Homework Accountability section.

Remind students to use this lessons' vocabulary wherever possible in their written responses.

- ▶ Students follow along.

Homework

Write a short response to the following prompt:

Read the first paragraph of the Dedicatory Letter of *The Prince*, from “In most instances it is customary for those” through “to know the nature of princes well one must be of the people,” and respond to the following question:

How does this letter reveal Machiavelli's point of view in *The Prince*?