

# The analects of confucius essay sample

[Countries](#), [China](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

There is often a parallel drawn between Confucianism and Confucius himself, however relations between them are very flimsy. Confucius was a famous sage and philosopher (551 BC – 479 BC) of China. His teachings had very strong impact on East Asia. Nevertheless, Confucius' ideas were not acknowledged during his life, and it often occurred that he remained unemployed.

Unfortunately, like plenty other influential figures, Confucius did not leave us any direct access to his ideas. The only source is recorded recollections of his disciples and their students. Moreover, more than two centuries after Confucius' the massive burning of books destroyed a lot of available sources of “unnecessary” thought during the Qin Dynasty.

*The Analects* of Confucius are probably the closest primary source for his thoughts. These consist of discussions with his disciples presented in short sayings. As far as the text is a compilation of scraps of conversation, questions and responses, there is no coherent system of thought. But, we can outline Confucius' ideas from the fragments that remain. His concept functioned as a means for expressing Chinese traditions as regards the peasants, in particular.

Confucius recommended government to show respect to common people, and treat them with dignity so that they will be respectful towards government. He compared relations between ruler and peasants to the relations between parents and children, devotion to parents and kindness to children will breed loyalty. “*Promote those who are worthy, train those who are incompetent; that is the best form of encouragement*” (Book 20).

Confucius expressed great respect to the human dignity of the common people. “ *You may rob the Three Armies of their commander, but you cannot deprive the humblest peasant of his opinion* ” (Book 9).

Though, that did not mean that he thought that the opinions of the peasants were of the same value as the higher moral understanding of the well-educated gentlemen.

If to compare Confucius’ attitude toward common people and the way Jesus treated them we can trace some elitism in Confucius believes. Thus he claimed that it is only possible to make people follow The Way, the moral code, but it is utterly impossible to make them understand it, on the other hand Jesus believed that every single human being has the ability to understand morality.

In addition to it Confucius defined the relation of superiors and inferiors like that between the wind and the grass. The grass must bend, when the wind blows across it. (Book 12)

Moreover Confucius derives certain features that distinguish a “ gentleman” from common people. The term *Jen* is used to stand for “ goodness” or “ human-heartedness” or “ humanity”, the highest level of moral development. Jen consists of all the qualities constituting a part of a moral life and when all these qualities are present, one can fairly be identified as a “ superior man,” or gentleman.

At the same time Confucius assumed that men of superior learning, whatever their original social statuses had the right to tell the rulers how

they should conduct themselves and their government. Confucius thus propounded the idea of a “career open to talent” a concept that was essentially revolutionary and an implicit challenge to hereditary power and thus can be associated with notion of Meritocracy, which is a system of government based on rule by ability (merit) rather than by wealth or social position. A virtuous plebeian who cultivates his qualities could be a “gentleman”, whilst a shameless son of a King was only a “small man.” He allowed any kind of student to be his disciple and intended to train future rulers.

Confucius, *Analects of Confucius* translated by Simon Leys, Replica Books, 1997.