

# Napoleon, Machiavelli's perfect prince essay sample



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This essay will give an overview of Napoleons life, explain the excerpt from "The Prince", and explain, using evidence from Napoleon's life, how Napoleon followed the advice in "The Prince".

Napoleon Bonaparte was born on August 5th, 1769, in Corsica to an aristocratic family. At age nine, Napoleon left for France to study at Brienne, a private school. In 1784, he moved to Paris to study at the Royal Military Academy. A year later, Napoleon entered the military as a second lieutenant. Directly following the French Revolution, he returned to his home island. He realized that he had large differences with the governor and soon became the leader of a group opposed to the Corsican government. When Napoleon's home was attacked and destroyed, Napoleon was forced to flee for his life. On June 10, 1793 he was banished from his homeland.

On December 18, 1793, under the command of 24 year old Napoleon, the fleet of the revolutionary army attacked the British fleet. Napoleon was wounded in battle and upon his return to France he was given a hero's welcome. Two years later, at age 26, he was made a full general and put in command of the army of the interior. In 1799, Napoleon took over the Directory and was voted consul for life. Several years later, on December 2nd, 1804, Napoleon, crowned himself emperor. Napoleon realized he would not be able to militarily defeat Britain; therefore he instituted the continental system, a ban of trade against Britain. When Portugal did not agree to this and continued to trade with Great Britain, Napoleon marched through Spain to attack Portugal. On his return through Spain, he "persuaded" the king to step down and Napoleon appointed his brother in law, Joseph Bonaparte, king.

In 1812, Napoleon amassed a large number of troops on the Russian border, and on June 23 he invaded Russia. He won several victories and threw the Russians into retreat. When the Russian winter arrived, Napoleon's army was not properly equipped and only 100,000 out of the original 600,000 soldiers made it out of Russia alive. On August 26 and 27 of 1814, Napoleon defeated the 6th coalition in battle, but he was outnumbered and eventually defeated. Subsequently he was exiled to Elba. On February 26, 1815, Napoleon escaped and began his march to France gathering an army around him. Arriving in Paris, he reclaimed France. His victory was short lived and he was defeated only 100 days later at Waterloo. He was then exiled to St. Helen, where he wrote his memoirs and lived out his days in peace. Napoleon Bonaparte died on May 5th 1821.

Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527), was an Italian statesman and philosopher, who did not write about an ideal world, but to show the true way in which countries were run. Machiavelli wrote that a politician must not consider religious or moral values when making decisions. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli explains that someone who does what is morally right to do will not make a successful ruler and will bring about his own downfall.

In this excerpt, Machiavelli explains that a prince cannot have all good virtues. He should, however, appear to have them and, if necessary to save his power and state he should use those "bad" virtues that would cause a scandal. Machiavelli states that a good prince must realize that humans are naturally selfish and the successful prince must use this to his advantage. This excerpt also explains that a prince should be feared and loved, but if he cannot be both, he should be feared but not hated. Machiavelli states in *The* <https://assignbuster.com/napoleon-machiavellis-perfect-prince-essay-sample/>

Prince, that a good prince does not have to honor his promises when they are against his interests because other men would not honor theirs. Summed up in one idea, A Prince should appear to be good but have the ability to be evil.

Napoleon would have been Machiavelli's perfect prince for several reasons. Machiavelli believed that anyone who could get power had a right to it, and Napoleon had no right to the Crown but become emperor anyway.

Machiavelli said that once you have power you can twist the interests of the government to match your own, and Napoleon did this very well. According to Machiavelli, a good prince should not hide behind fortresses but should be out in the open and use his fear and love to protect him; Napoleon did this when he came back from Elba and walked alone to confront the troops that had been sent to oppose him.

"The Prince" says that a good prince should be honest and faithful but when necessary he should be able to break his word. Napoleon Bonaparte wrote "The True Conquests, the only ones that leave no regret, are those that have been wrested from ignorance." But several years later he limited knowledge and censored everything telling the public only what he wanted them to hear.

When Napoleon surrendered to the 6th coalition he was exiled but in true Machiavellian fashion, he returned about a year later to re-claim France. Napoleon's leadership, beliefs, and ideals prove that while being a great leader Napoleon was also very Machiavellian in nature.