



## THE MERITS AND DEMERITS OF MERITOCRACY

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Majority of individuals place a premium on the concept of meritocracy since it can be considered a fair form of giving rewards where they are due. Operating on the premises of objectivity and standardized achievement, meritocracy can indeed be beneficial. One does not advance to any position without having certain qualifications such as education, intelligence, credentials, ability and competency. One is set apart from others because of those factors.

In the pursuit of higher education, meritocracy is the normal manner of administering a sense of organization and advancement to students. Grades are computed based on actual performance in periodic examinations, scholastic projects, practical activities and overall curricular performance. Failure to make the cut warrants lagging behind one's peers through a failing mark. Just as companies are said to be in the red when their business do not go as expected, students are under pressure to work, work, and work on their grades or otherwise risk failure. Moving upward is the key to further advancement, and students are ill-advised to dilly-dally with their time in worthless pursuits. Some say only the young are prone to such downfall, but even the supposedly older (and supposedly wiser) ones sometimes do get afflicted with those very shortcomings.

For the chosen ones, however, there may be a tendency to become at once complacent and arrogant, being set apart as they are based on their merits. Those whose credentials carry more weight than those of others can become over-confident of themselves and may eventually become victims of false pride. Take for instance a young teacher who has passed a licensure examination and has been in active service for several years. When confronted with a far more skillful but informal teacher, who, despite not having obtained the same degree and not having a license to practice, has had valuable experience and innate talent for the profession, the fully-licensed teacher would predictably refuse to acknowledge her inadequacies. Does the possession of a license indicate greater expertise all the time? It most definitely doesn't. In this case, the licensed teacher merely rides on false pride. Pedagogy gets better with age, as wisdom and good sense always do.

The concept of meritocracy, although proven to be both a qualitative and quantitative ideology, does not always guarantee that only the best and the brightest get to be posted where they need to be. The system of meritocracy may prevent corruption and favoritism, but it has a tendency to become elitist and could lead to rising stratification. Those who are gifted with charisma and genuine talent born out of experience might consistently be placed in the sidelines, while their more credentialed counterparts land the juicier roles at work and in society.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What are the merits of meritocracy? What are its negative effects?
2. What is the system of choosing public officials in your country? Are there qualifications that all candidates must meet in order to run for public office? Be specific, if needed.
3. If you owned a company, how would you hire employees? What framework or system would you specify?
4. When is meritocracy necessary? In what instances is it unnecessary?
5. Do you believe that all public officials are qualified for their specific positions? Why or why not?