

IDEAS 71

**International Online Teachers Society
Debate
Educational Materials For
Advance and Upper Intermediate
Students**



**International Online Teachers Society
Publishing Committee**



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THE 71ST INTERNATIONAL ONLINE TEACHERS SOCIETY ESSAY CONTEST

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PUTTING PEOPLE IN POWER---AND OTHER HORROR STORIES

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In a few months, the voting populace of my country will be trooping to the polls and casting their ballots to propel new local rulers and national lawmakers into power. Several months before, numerous political aspirants already began their tyranny of our senses via TV and radio campaigns, murals at the most unlikely places, streamers and tarpaulin signs bearing their countenances and stickers prominently displayed on public vehicles of conveyance. The only word missing from such bombardments is VOTE, but people are not so dense as not to be able to deduce what those aspirants' intentions are for posting such materials. I sometimes wonder how there can be such a thing as premature campaigning when such manner of plastering each and every available open space with candidates' names and faces is so blatantly done.

However, such practices only go to show just how powerful voting society truly is. Very soon, those very candidates will be doing all sorts of publicity campaigns in order to forward their desire to be anointed by the public into political offices. Those candidates will be dancing to the most viewed video on YouTube, will be raising their arms endlessly in the air at the risk of getting lymphatic abscess, will be jumping and looking nutty as a fruitcake all over the stage, will be kissing babies and handing out paper fans and flyers and doing all other forms of crazy stuff just so people remember them come election day. Definitely, those candidates will not be wasting precious time and money doing nothing to drive their ambitions home. And oh, don't forget those endless hired passenger vehicles with loudspeakers and annoying, LSS-inducing jingles blaring. I dread the time I will truly hate the music video that's been the most widely watched on YouTube. What dreadful jingle will the candidates pay someone to create? Good for the jingle makers, bad for the public that will eventually have to tolerate listening to the jingles day in and day out.

Power truly rests in us that vote for our officials, local and national. See how they spend so much just so we install them in power? Unfortunately, our choices often do not reflect the true will of the wise among us. We welcome all candidates into our homes via TV, radio and other forms of media. Sadly, we seldom vote into power the truly service-oriented ones. And even if we do install honest ones, they seldom get unaffected by the affectations and trappings of their authority such as graft and corruption. They come in clean and seldom leave unblemished, with their hands untouched by dishonesty. Power corrupts, and many times, absolute power corrupts absolutely. What's even more scary is how we have come to accept that reality so readily.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Have you ever had the ambition to become a politician? Why or why not?
2. Why does power corrupt so often?
3. Talk about a political leader you so admire. What makes this leader unique?
4. Justify the statement that the public holds ultimate power over those they vote for.
5. How can an honest individual hope to serve people in complete selfless service? Be as specific as needed.



EMPOWERING THOSE IN POWER

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Power enervates and makes possible limitless things.

Those in power enjoy prestige, fame, untold wealth potentials, respect. Being a selfless individual with a spirit to help others is monumental, but being installed into power carries with it many fringe benefits: you'll get ahead in unbelievable long lines, be given a seat and even a cup of coffee, too. That's the reason that's most often used by those who justify why they aspire to become political officials. Being good and generous is simply not enough; they've got to have authority to wield, too.

When we were children, classroom elections were always about who were the most popular, the most intelligent, the most well-liked. Those who became sergeant-at-arms were often the big, burly ones, those who could inspire a sliver of fear just by a look or a stern voice. But those who got voted as president had to be at the top of the class, at least, or had shown leadership qualities. In our very young minds, we had already had our earliest concepts of power and responsibility.

Power and responsibility are elements that ideally go hand in hand. With great power comes great responsibility. One can not escape responsibility for their decisions when they are entrusted with power over others. Those in power are inherently responsible for their decisions and actions. Power should never be misconstrued as something to be used to fool people or muddy up perspectives in the manner one prefers. This is not one of those "limitless things" mentioned in the first statement. You can fool some people some of the time, you can fool some people most of the time, but you can never fool all people all the time. Power rests in those that empower you, and politicians have to be strongly mindful of this fact. They need to be reminded that their power is a gift, not a privilege. They have been entrusted with a higher purpose, not handed a cake on a silver platter.

Those that fail to seek this nobler purpose while they are in power are not fit to rule. They do not give justice to the word POWER at all. Being in power enables them to do greater things to even more people, enervates them to perform above and beyond their call of duty, and makes possible the unhampered delivery of what makes them the best of what they are.

Hopefully, the best of what they are is not being troublemakers, warmongers or absolute grafters and plunderers. Hopefully, the power that they are given by the people does not find an outlet in the darkest facets of their personality and humanity. Hopefully, power courses through their veins to their hearts and not the monkeys in their brains.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What has been your personal experience of power? Elaborate on your answer.
2. Is there a particular powerful person you abhor or hate so much? Talk about this specific person in class.
3. Why is it difficult to stay honest while holding a political office?
4. What are your personal beliefs of power and people in power?
5. How can a person in power keep his perspectives clear and honest?



The Psychology of Power

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In some people, the feeling of having no power can actually be quite unbearable. Most of us feel miserable and hopeless if we do not have a certain type of power. That is why most people do what they do today. Some work hard in order to earn money in order to increase their status in this world while others try to exercise everyday in order to have a strong physique. In essence, everyone wants more power and it often seems to look like we are hungry for it. However, we need to look like we are democratic or civilized in order to never look foolish or power hungry to others. Niccolo Machiavelli once wrote that any man who tries to get power all the time is bound to be ruined by people who are not in good favors.

Power exists in both in the physical and mental realm. There is such a thing as political power while there is also something based on current or electricity. In the mental realm, power is based on influence according to the behavior of others. Power is often seen by others are unjust or unrighteous. The reason for this is actually deeply rooted in our instinct. Over a thousand years, power has been applied through slave and master relationship. Kings and emperors ruled their subjects according to divine right and power. Their enslavement led to the death of thousands of their subjects. This fear of enslavement is the reason why most people fear the concept of power.

However, power can also be used in a positive manner. It can be used in order to motivate and enlighten others rather than enslaving them. People are often attracted to power and due to their attraction they will often be motivated in order to gain it. By seeing the positive side of power, human beings will be motivated in order to improve their lives.

In order to gain power, we only need to know which type of power to look out for. There is something called false power, wherein we feel like we are more powerful than others because we are stronger or because we have a certain weapon which we can use in order to enslave others. Wealth is also known as a type of false or fake power since it can be taken and it is not permanent. There is also a type of power known as real power. This form of strength comes both in the strength of the body and the mind. As we have learned before, knowledge is power and the one who is the most knowledgeable is the one with power. This means that people who are smart are often the ones with the most power.

Questions:

- 1) What did Niccolo Machiavelli mentioned about power?
- 2) Power Exists where?
- 3) How can it be used in a positive power?
- 4) What are false and real power?
- 5) Why do people think that power is unjust?



HUNGRY FOR POWER

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There are people who lack the drive and talent, who wants attention, seeks recognition and this is the reason why people are hungry for power. When someone is so dissatisfied and disturbed in life, they turn to crave for power. When others do not have that self-esteem, confidence and are so inferior to others, they go hungry for power. People who are hungry for power are relentless to others, inflexible, implacable or inexorable. Best word to describe these kinds of people is being selfish. Power-hungry people use to take advantage of other people just to get their own way. It even reaches to the point of taking the rights of the people away. When this happens they tend to be abusive to others and even to their own peers. Oftentimes, people become so conceited and egoistic that they want to have all the power and control to reign over others. All these things simply prove what kind of a person that individual is, a mean person.

Power can be a means just like money. How can one say that a person is hungry for power? When you become so mean that you trample on others, who are weak and desolated, then you are hungry for power. Thus being mean, only shows that they want to accumulate more power or they wanted to maintain that existing power that they already have. Oh yes, you can readily say that there are a lot of bullies out there who want to prey on helpless and powerless people. A lot of people strive for more power and wants to be in a higher position because they believe that people are more likely to obey and respect you if you are on this level, meaning you are most likely to succeed in your endeavors.

As a matter of fact, dealing with people who are hungry for power can be very emotionally taxing. They can even wind up sometimes jeopardizing your job security. You shouldn't really have to cross their lines when dealing with hungry-power co-workers or you might end up looking like you are the one starting an inter-office war. If this is so, you would most probably appear to be the bad guy so you might as well be careful in dealing with this kind of people. Needless to say, one must be on the lookout and therefore address the negative behavior of your co-worker in a positive and very constructive manner. People who are hungry for power are predominantly seen in those leaders who use their power to get things done for leadership is all about power and influence. They most of the time come into the conclusion that they can delude themselves of working for the greater good. But if you penetrate within, you'll find that they engage in a behavior that is morally wrong. They mistake themselves of having that notion of having the best interests of his followers at heart. They actually think that in engaging in this wrong behavior, they can just simply get away with it.

The negative side of having power is that the more people possess it, the more they focus on their egocentric desires making them unable to see others' perspectives. On the contrary, power can make leaders assertive and lead them to be confident and very certain of their decisions. I guess the latter would be far more being the best attitude of a good and a true powerful leader who is not just hungry for power.

Questions for discussion:

1. How do you deal with people who are hungry for power?
2. Can you easily assess a person if he/she is not a power-hungry person? How?
3. Who do you think are those people who are most hungry for power? Explain your answer.
4. How can you assert yourself to be a truthful leader and at the same do not appear to be hungry for power?
5. How can you determine that a person is hungry for power? Justify your answer.





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