Speculum Principis

* A literary subgenre
* Has roots in ancient Greece but flourished in the middle ages
* Textbooks outline the basic principles advice and guidance for ruler regarding rules and behaviour
* Generally took a highly moral stance
* Generally medieval thinking about kingship were based on the notions of acting righteously.
* They advised that moral behaviour was vital in both the private and public lives of rules to ensure effective rule
* It was considered that any moral deficiencies in the lives, minds, behaviours of any individual ruler would have detrimental effect on their people
* Any sort of disasters ( Famines, floods, foreign invasions, financial difficulties) were seen as divine punishment for the rulers failure to adhere to a strict moral code
* From birth to death, the life of the medieval people was dominated entirely by the church and many religious institutions gained power and wealth
* In Medieval times, laws, public policies and governance of the people were all significantly influenced and directed by the church
* Christianity was the stabilising force in everyday life, keeping the community framework together
* During the renaissance society v=became increasingly secularised, due to more education opportunity, more access to historic and religious texts, scientific discoveries, the development of the printing press, etc.
* In the Late Middle Ages, there were new economic and political opportunities opening up for Western Europe, Encouraging people to take more of an interest in the world
* Renaissance philosophers and writers saw humans as intelligent creatures capable of reason, and thus, questioning the authority, rather than mindless pawns helplessly manipulated by god
* The church was also losing the trust of its followers, as people now had more knowledge to question its ultimate power and corrupt policies

* Humanism is evidently influential in the Prince because Machiavelli, a humanist himself, targets human nature in portraying the ideal monarchy,
* In the Prince Machiavelli articulately examines the dynamics of humanity understanding that while a good ruler should possess some admirable qualities, it is impossible for any authentic being to be entirely good
* According to humanist philosophy, human dignity lies not so much in the possession of an immortal soul as in the capacity for and exercise of freedom
* Fortune (which could be influenced) as opposed to Providence (which could not) became the presiding genius. These points clearly presents in Machiavelli’s Treatise
* Machiavelli was well aware that he was breaking from tradition. He announces that he intends to turn the go against expectations of readers by recommending that rulers ignore any sense of morality or goodness in gaining and maintaining power
* He was consciously going against a long tradition of advice books for rulers, the “Mirror for Princess”, which recommended that leaders be models of virtues, always upholding the highest moral standards and being honest, trustworthy, generous and merciful
* He almost mocks those who believe that they can lead with virtue and goodness in an imaginary perfect world
* He teaches that the virtues taught by religion are incomparable with effectively leading a population. The leaders must have the power of a lion and the cleverness of a fox in order to preserve the republic and its institutions