

# Art of War

## Quotes by Sun Tzu

### The Legend of Sun Tzu

The legend goes that **Sun Wu** was born into minor nobility in what is now Shandong, a part of China north of Shanghai that became famous for Confucius and the really tasty Shandong Chicken. Born "Sun Wu", he was given a good education and like Machiavelli, he wrote a military treatise in order to get noticed and hired by royalty. Unlike Machiavelli, Sun Tzu's stratagem worked.

Sun Tzu expanded his 13 short chapter **Art of War** into 82 chapters and trained the army. Eventually he broke the peace by invading the southern state of Yue. Other conflicts ensured but although his troops were once outnumbered one to ten he was always victorious. Many successes followed and continued after his death. Some considered his death to be another of his deceptions.



*Sun Tzu quotes help you successfully manage your children, spouse and boss.*

### Quotes from the Art of War

1. A kingdom that has once been destroyed can never come again into being; nor can the dead ever be brought back to life.

Art of War, Chapter 12

2. A leader leads by example, not by force.

Sun Tzu quotes

3. A military operation involves deception. Even though you are competent, appear to be incompetent. Though effective, appear to be ineffective.

Quote by Sun Tzu

4. A wise general makes a point of foraging of the enemy.

Art of War quotes, Chapter 2

5. According to my assessment, even if you have many more troops than others, how can that help you to victory?

Quotes from Art of War

6. All is fair in love and war.

Sun Wu quotes

7. All men can see these tactics whereby I conquer, but what none can see is the

- strategy out of which victory is evolved.  
Art of War quote, Chapter 6
8. All war is based on deception. Quotes,  
Art of War by Sun Tzu, Chapter 1
9. All war is deception.  
Sun Tzu quote
10. All warfare is based on deception.  
Sun Tzu Art of War quote
11. All warfare is based on deception. Hence, when able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces, we must seem inactive; when we are near, we must make the enemy believe we are far away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near.  
Quotes Sun Tzu's Art of War
12. All warfare is based on deception. There is no place where espionage is not used. Offer the enemy bait to lure him.  
Quotes Sunzi Art of War
13. Anger may in time change to gladness; vexation may be succeeded by content. But a kingdom that has once been destroyed can never come again into being; nor can the dead ever be brought back to life.  
Quotes Art of War by Sun Wu
14. Appear weak when you are strong, and strong when you are weak.  
Quotes Sun Tzu
15. Appraise war in terms of the fundamental factors. The first of these factors is moral influence.  
Sunzi quote
16. Be extremely subtle, even to the point of formlessness. Be extremely mysterious, even to the point of soundlessness. Thereby you can be the director of the opponent's fate.  
China 500 BC
17. Build your opponent a golden bridge to retreat across.  
Sunzi quotes
18. But a kingdom that has once been destroyed can never come again into being; nor can the dead ever be brought back to life.  
Quote by Sun Wu
19. Can you imagine what I would do if I could do all I can?

Sun Wu quote

20. Confront them with annihilation, and they will then survive; plunge them into a deadly situation, and they will then live. When people fall into danger, they are then able to strive for victory.

Art of War, Chapter 11

21. Convince your enemy that he will gain very little by attacking you; this will diminish his enthusiasm.

Quote Sun Wu

22. Do not press an enemy at bay.

Quote by Sunzi

23. Energy may be likened to the bending of a crossbow; decision, to the releasing of a trigger.

Art of War Sun Tzu quotes, Chapter 5

24. Engage people with what they expect; it is what they are able to discern and confirms their projections. It settles them into predictable patterns of response, occupying their minds while you wait for the extraordinary moment - that which they cannot anticipate.

The Art of War quotes

25. Even the finest sword plunged into salt water will eventually rust.

Quote by Sun Tzu

26. For them to perceive the advantage of defeating the enemy, they must also have their rewards.

Quotes from Art of War, Chapter 2

27. For to win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.

Quotes Sunzi Art of War, Chapter 3

28. He who is prudent and lies in wait for an enemy who is not, will be victorious.

Sun Wu quotes

29. He who knows when he can fight and when he cannot, will be victorious.

Sun Tzu quote

30. He will win who knows how to handle both superior and inferior forces.

Sun Tzu famous quotes

31. He will win who knows when to fight and when not to fight.

Quotes Art of War by Sun Tzu

32. He will win whose army is animated by the spirit throughout all its ranks.  
Sun Tzu Art of War quote
33. Hence a commander who advances without any thought of winning personal fame and withdraws in spite of certain punishment, whose only concern is to protect his people and promote the interests of his ruler, is the nation's treasure. Because he fusses over his men as if they were infants, they will accompany him into the deepest valleys; because he fusses over his men as if they were his own beloved sons, they will die by his side. If he is generous with them and yet they do not do as he tells them, if he loves them and yet they do not obey his commands, if he is so undisciplined with them that he cannot bring them into proper order, they will be like spoiled children who can be put to no good use at all.  
Quotes Sun Tzu's Art of War
34. Hence that general is skilful in attack whose opponent does not know what to defend; and he is skilful in defense whose opponent does not know what to attack.  
Quotes Art of War by Sun Wu, Chapter 6
35. Hence the saying: If you know the enemy and you know yourself, your victory will not stand in doubt; if you know Heaven and you know Earth, you may make your victory complete.  
Quotes from Sun Tzu
36. Hence to fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting.  
Sunzi quote
37. If fighting is sure to result in victory, then you must fight, even though the ruler forbid it; if fighting will not result in victory, then you must not fight even at the ruler's bidding.  
Quote by Sun Wu
38. If I determine the enemy's disposition of forces while I have no perceptible form, I can concentrate my forces while the enemy is fragmented. The pinnacle of military deployment approaches the formless: if it is formless, then even the deepest spy cannot discern it nor the wise make plans against it.  
Sunzi quotes
39. If ignorant both of your enemy and yourself, you are certain to be in peril.  
China
40. If our soldiers are not overburdened with money, it is not because they have a distaste for riches; if their lives are not unduly long, it is not because they are disinclined to longevity.



Sun Wu quote

41. If quick, I survive. If not quick, I am lost. This is death.

Quote by Sunzi

42. If soldiers are punished before they have grown attached to you, they will not prove submissive; and, unless submissive, then will be practically useless. If, when the soldiers have become attached to you, punishments are not enforced, they will still be useless.

Suntzu, quotes Art of War, Chapter 9

43. If the mind is willing, the flesh could go on and on without many things.

Quote Sun Wu

44. If we know that our own men are in a condition to attack, but are unaware that the enemy is not open to attack, we have gone only halfway towards victory.

Sun Wu quote

45. If words of command are not clear and distinct, if orders are not thoroughly understood, then the general is to blame. But, if orders are clear and the soldiers nevertheless disobey, then it is the fault of their officers.

Sunzi quotes

46. If you are far from the enemy, make him believe you are near.

Sunzi quotes

47. If you are near the enemy, make him believe you are far from him. If you are far from the enemy, make him believe you are now.

Quotes Sun Tzu

48. If you are strong, appear weak. But if you are weak, appear strong.

Quotes Art of War by Sun Wu

49. If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles.

Quotes Sun Tzu's Art of War

50. If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.

Sun Tzu Art of War quote

51. If you know the enemy and know yourself, your victory will not stand in doubt; if you know Heaven and know Earth, you may make your victory complete.

Quote by Sun Wu

52. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat.

Quote by Sunzi

53. If you wait by the river long enough, the bodies of your enemies will float by.

Sun Tzu quote

54. If your enemy is secure at all points, be prepared for him. If he is in superior strength, evade him. If your opponent is temperamental, seek to irritate him. Pretend to be weak, that he may grow arrogant. If he is taking his ease, give him no rest. If his forces are united, separate them. If sovereign and subject are in accord, put division between them. Attack him where he is unprepared, appear where you are not expected.

Sun Tzu the Art of War quotes, Chapter 1

55. In battle, there are not more than two methods of attack - the direct and the indirect; yet these two in combination give rise to an endless series of maneuvers.

Quote Sun Wu

56. In making tactical dispositions, the highest pitch you can attain is to conceal them.

Quotes Sunzi Art of War

57. In peace prepare for war, in war prepare for peace. The art of war is of vital importance to the state. It is matter of life and death, a road either to safety or to ruin. Hence under no circumstances can it be neglected.

Sun Wu quotes

58. In the practical art of war, the best thing of all is to take the enemy's country whole and intact; to shatter and destroy it is not so good.

Quotes from Art of War

59. In the practical art of war, the best thing of all is to take the enemy's country whole and intact; to shatter and destroy it is not so good. So, too, it is better to recapture an army entire than to destroy it, to capture a regiment, a detachment or a company entire than to destroy them.

Quote by Sun Tzu

60. In war, then, let your great object be victory, not lengthy campaigns.

Sun Tzu Art of War quotes

61. Invincibility lies in the defense; the possibility of victory in the attack.

The Art of War Sun Tzu quotes

62. It is essential to seek out enemy agents who have come to conduct espionage against you and to bribe them to serve you. Give them instructions and care for them. Thus doubled agents are recruited and used.  
Art of War, Chapter 13
63. It is imperative to contest all factions for complete victory, so the army is not garrisoned and the profit can be total. This is the law of strategic siege.  
Quote by Sun Wu
64. It is only one who is thoroughly acquainted with the evils of war that can thoroughly understand the profitable way of carrying it on.  
Sun Tzu Art of War quote
65. It is only the enlightened ruler and the wise general who will use the highest intelligence of the army for the purposes of spying, and thereby they achieve great results.  
Sun Tzu's quotes
66. It is the rule in war, if our forces are ten to the enemy's one, to surround him; if five to one, to attack him; if twice as numerous, to divide our army into two.  
Quotes Art of War by Sun Wu
67. Keep your friends close, and your enemies closer.  
Quotes Sun Tzu
68. Know thy self, know thy enemy. A thousand battles, a thousand victories.  
Sunzi quote
69. Know your enemy and know yourself and you can fight a hundred battles without disaster.  
Sunzi quotes
70. Know yourself and you will win all battles.  
Sun Wu quote
71. Let your plans be dark and impenetrable as night, and when you move, fall like a thunderbolt.  
Quotes Art of War by Sun Tzu, Chapter 7
72. Like the sun and moon, they end but to begin anew; like the four seasons, they pass away to return once more.  
Art of War
73. Move swift as the Wind and closely-formed as the Wood. Attack like the Fire and be still as the Mountain.  
Art of War Sun Tzu quotes

74. No ruler should put troops into the field merely to gratify his own spleen; no general should fight a battle simply out of pique. If it is to your advantage, make a forward move; if not, stay where you are. Anger may in time change to gladness; vexation may be succeeded by content. But a kingdom that has once been destroyed can never come again into being; nor can the dead ever be brought back to life.

The Art of War quotes

75. Nothing is more difficult than the art of maneuvering for advantageous positions.

Quote by Sun Tzu

76. Now the reason the enlightened prince and the wise general conquer the enemy whenever they move and their achievements surpass those of ordinary men is foreknowledge.

Quotes from Art of War

77. Of all those in the army close to the commander none is more intimate than the secret agent; of all rewards none more liberal than those given to secret agents; of all matters none is more confidential than those relating to secret operations.

Sun Wu quotes

78. One hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the most skillful, subduing the other's military without battle is the most skillful.

Quotes Sunzi Art of War

79. One mark of a great soldier is that he fight on his own terms or fights not at all.

Quote Sun Wu

80. One may know how to conquer without being able to do it.

Art of War quote, Chapter 4

81. One who sets the entire army in motion to chase an advantage will not attain it.

Sun Tzu quote

82. Opportunities multiply as they are seized.

Quote by Sunzi

83. Order or disorder depends on organisation; courage or cowardice on circumstances; strength or weakness on dispositions.

Quote by Sun Wu

84. Pretend inferiority and encourage his arrogance.

Sun Tzu Art of War quote



85. Prohibit the taking of omens, and do away with superstitious doubts. Then, until death itself comes, no calamity need be feared.

Quotes Sun Tzu's Art of War

86. Regard your soldiers as your children, and they will follow you into the deepest valleys; look on them as your own beloved sons.

Quotes Sunzi Art of War

87. Regard your soldiers as your children, and they will follow you into the deepest valleys; look on them as your own beloved sons, and they will stand by you even unto death.

Quote Sun Wu

88. Secret operations are essential in war; upon them the army relies to make its every move.

Sun Tzu quote

89. Si utilizas al enemigo para derrotar al enemigo, serás poderoso en cualquier lugar a donde vayas.

Sun Tzu phrases

90. So in war, the way is to avoid what is strong, and strike at what is weak.

Quote by Sunzi

91. So the important thing in a military operation is victory, not persistence.

Quotes Art of War by Sun Wu

92. So there are five ways of knowing who will win. Those who know when to fight and when not to fight are victorious. Those who discern when to use many or few troops are victorious. Those whose upper and lower ranks have the same desire are victorious.

Quotes Sun Tzu

93. Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.

Sunzi quote

94. Supreme excellence consists of breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting.

Sunzi quotes

95. The art of giving orders is not to try to rectify the minor blunders and not to be swayed by petty doubts.

Sun Wu quote

96. The Art of War is self-explanatory.

Quotes Art of War by Sun Tzu

97. The art of war teaches us to rely not on the likelihood of the enemy's not coming, but on our own readiness to receive him; not on the chance of his not attacking, but rather on the fact that we have made our position unassailable.

Art of War, Chapter 8

98. The best victory is when the opponent surrenders of its own accord before there are any actual hostilities. It is best to win without fighting.

Sun Tzu quotes

99. The control of a large force is the same principle as the control of a few men: it is merely a question of dividing up their numbers.

Art of War quotes

100. The end and aim of spying in all its five varieties is knowledge of the enemy; and this knowledge can only be derived, in the first instance, from the converted spy. Hence it is essential that the converted spy be treated with the utmost liberality.

Quote by Sun Tzu

101. The enlightened ruler is heedful, and the good general full of caution.

Sun Wu quotes

102. The general who advances without coveting fame and retreats without fearing disgrace, whose only thought is to protect his country and do good service for his sovereign, is the jewel of the kingdom.

Quotes from Art of War, Chapter 10

103. The general who wins the battle makes many calculations in his temple before the battle is fought. The general who loses makes but few calculations beforehand.

Quote by Sun Wu

104. The good fighters of old first put themselves beyond the possibility of defeat, and then waited for an opportunity of defeating the enemy.

Quote by Sunzi

105. The greatest victory is that which requires no battle.

Quotes Art of War by Sun Wu

106. The one who figures on victory at headquarters before even doing battle is the one who has the most strategic factors on his side.

Quotes Sun Tzu

107. The opportunity to secure ourselves against defeat lies in our own hands,

but the opportunity of defeating the enemy is provided by the enemy himself.

Sunzi quote

108. The proximity of an army causes prices to go up; and high prices cause people's substance to be drained away. When their substance is drained away, they will be afflicted by heavy exaction. With this loss of substance and exhaustion of strength, the homes of the people will be stripped bare, and their incomes dissipated.

Sunzi quotes

109. The quality of decision is like the well-timed swoop of a falcon which enables it to strike and destroy its victim.

Sun Wu quote

110. The skilful employer of men will employ the wise man, the brave man, the covetous man, and the stupid man.

Quotes Art of War by Sun Tzu

111. The skillful tactician may be likened to the shuai-jan. Now the shuai-jan is a snake that is found in the Ch'ang mountains. Strike at its head, and you will be attacked by its tail; strike at its tail, and you will be attacked by its head; strike at its middle, and you will be attacked by head and tail both.

Art of War

112. The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.

Art of War Sun Tzu quotes

113. There are not more than five musical notes, yet the combination of these five give rise to more melodies that can ever be heard.

Sun Tzu Art of War quote

114. There are not more than five musical notes, yet the combinations of these five give rise to more melodies than can ever be heard. There are not more than five primary colours, yet in combination they produce more hues than can ever been seen. There are not more than five cardinal tastes, yet combinations of them yield more flavours than can ever be tasted.

Quotes Sun Tzu's Art of War

115. There are roads which must not be followed, armies which must not be attacked, towns which must not be besieged, positions which must not be contested, commands of the sovereign which must not be obeyed.

Quotes Sunzi Art of War

116. There has never been a protracted war from which a country has benefited.

Quote Sun Wu

117. There is no instance of a country having benefited from prolonged warfare.  
Sun Tzu quote
118. There is no instance of a nation benefiting from prolonged warfare.  
Art of War quote
119. Therefore a victorious army first wins and then seeks battle; a defeated army first battles and then seeks victory.  
The Art of War quotes
120. Therefore one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the most skillful. Seizing the enemy without fighting is the most skillful.  
Quote by Sun Tzu
121. Those skilled at making the enemy move do so by creating a situation to which he must conform; they entice him with something he is certain to take, and with lures of ostensible profit they await him in strength.  
Quotes from Art of War
122. Thus it is that in war the victorious strategist only seeks battle after the victory has been won, whereas he who is destined to defeat first fights and afterwards looks for victory.  
Sun Wu quotes
123. Thus the expert in battle moves the enemy, and is not moved by him.  
Sunzi quotes
124. Thus we may know that there are five essentials for victory: - He will win who knows when to fight and when not to fight. - He will win who knows how to handle both superior and inferior forces. - He will win whose army is animated by the same spirit throughout all its ranks. - He will win who, prepared himself, waits to take the enemy unprepared. - He will win who has military capacity and is not interfered with by the sovereign.  
Sun Wu quote
125. Thus, what is of supreme importance in war is to attack the enemy's strategy.  
Quotes Art of War by Sun Tzu
126. To fight and conquer in all our battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting.  
The Art of War Sun Tzu quotes
127. To know your Enemy, you must become your Enemy.



Sun Tzu know your enemy

128. To perceive victory when it is known to all is not really skilful. Everyone calls victory in battle good, but it is not really good.

Quotes Sun Tzu s'Art of War

129. To secure ourselves against defeat lies in our own hands, but the opportunity of defeating the enemy is provided by the enemy himself.

Quotes Sunzi Art of War

130. To see victory only when it is within the ken of the common herd is not the acme of excellence.

Quote Sun Wu

131. To win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.

Sun Tzu quote

132. Treat your men as you would your own beloved sons. And they will follow you into the deepest valley.

Art of War quote

133. Ultimate excellence lies not in winning every battle, but in defeating the enemy without ever fighting.

Sun Tzu Art of War quotes

134. Unhappy is the fate of one who tries to win his battles and succeed in his attacks without cultivating the spirit of enterprise, for the result is waste of time and general stagnation.

Quote by Sun Tzu

135. Victorious warriors win first and then go to war, while defeated warriors go to war first and then seek to win.

Quotes from Art of War

136. Water shapes its course according to the nature of the ground over which it flows; the soldier works out his victory in relation to the foe whom he is facing.

Sun Wu quotes

137. What the ancients called a clever fighter is one who not only wins, but excels in winning with ease.

Quote by Sun Wu

138. Wheels of justice grind slow but grind fine.

Quote by Sunzi

139. When envoys are sent with compliments in their mouths, it is a sign that the enemy wishes for a truce.

Quotes Art of War by Sun Wu

140. When one treats people with benevolence, justice, and righteousness, and reposes confidence in them, the army will be united in mind and all will be happy to serve their leaders.

Sun Tzu leadership quotes

141. When strong, avoid them. If of high morale, depress them. Seem humble to fill them with conceit. If at ease, exhaust them. If united, separate them. Attack their weaknesses. Emerge to their surprise.

Sunzi quote

142. When the enemy is relaxed, make them toil. When full, starve them. When settled, make them move.

Sunzi quotes

143. When you surround an army, leave an outlet free. Do not press a desperate foe too hard.

Sun Wu quote

144. **You have to believe in yourself.**

Quotes Art of War by Sun Tzu