

Individual Learning Packet

**Teaching Unit**

**Crime and Punishment**

by Fyodor Dostoevsky

Copyright © 2002 by Prestwick House Inc., P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938. 1-800-932-4593.  
www.prestwickhouse.com Permission to copy this unit for classroom use is extended to purchaser for his or her  
personal use. This material, in whole or part, may not be copied for resale. Revised November, 2005.

ISBN 978-1-60389-742-6

Item No. 201170

# Crime and Punishment

## Notes

*Crime and Punishment* is a complex novel exploring the nature of a criminal, the psychological motivations for the crime, and the extent to which a criminal can be successfully rehabilitated. There are many interesting and multi-faceted characters in this intricate story. These characters all have long Russian names which can be confusing for readers. In addition, Dostoevsky often refers to a character by several different nicknames. For simplicity, all of the male characters in this Teaching Unit are referred to by their last name, and all of the female characters are referred to by their first name. Students may want to maintain a list of the characters that they can refer to as they read the story.

Due to the length of this novel, this Teaching Unit concentrates on theme and characterization.

All references come from the Prestwick House Literary Touchstone Press edition of *Crime and Punishment*, copyright 2005.

# Crime and Punishment

## Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. cite incidents from the novel to illustrate Raskolnikov's dual nature.
2. identify doubles or pairs of characters who share similar traits and discuss how these doubles add believability and suspense to the novel.
3. discuss the extent to which Raskolnikov believes that his decision to commit the crime, and the resulting consequences of that crime, are the result of predetermination or fate.
4. cite incidents from the novel illustrating the following theme: A man can be rehabilitated through the power of reconciliation, repentance, and love.
5. point out and explain religious symbols in the novel including:
  - the number 7
  - the number 30
  - the story of Lazarus
  - Sonia's cross
6. point out the significance of the color yellow and the number three and discuss what they may represent in *Crime and Punishment*.
7. cite incidents from the novel illustrating the extent to which, in Dostoevsky's opinion, the following factors contribute to criminal behavior:
  - the oppression of poverty
  - feelings of isolation
  - insanity
8. discuss the extent to which Dostoevsky's above beliefs were true then and are true now.
9. define vocabulary words from the text.
10. recognize and point out instances of irony in *Crime and Punishment*.
11. discuss the importance of dreams in the novel to foreshadow future actions and to give insight into the minds of the characters.

# Crime and Punishment

## Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. What is Raskolnikov's motive for killing the pawnbroker?
2. Relate the details of Raskolnikov's crime. What evidence is there that Raskolnikov is mentally unbalanced at the time he commits the murders?
3. List two techniques Porfiry uses to interrogate Raskolnikov and uncover evidence against him. To what extent is he successful?
4. Some critics believe that the character Razumihin serves to increase a reader's sympathy for Raskolnikov by helping to present him as a worthwhile man, even though he is a murderer. Cite incidents from the story to support this idea.
5. In what ways are Marmeladov and Raskolnikov alike? One of the themes of this novel is that through love and forgiveness, a man can be rehabilitated or reborn. In what way(s) does the character of Marmeladov help to illustrate this theme?
6. In what way(s) are Sonia and Dounia similar characters? Why do you think Raskolnikov confesses his crime to Sonia rather than to his sister Dounia?
7. Both Svidrigailov and Luzhin are described by some critics as representing the evil side of man. Cite incidents from the story to discuss the extent to which you agree with this idea. In your opinion, which man represents the greater evil?
8. Why does Katerina dress the children up as street singers?
9. What does Raskolnikov consider to be Sonia's greatest sin? In what way does Luzhin help her to understand Raskolnikov's point of view on this subject?
10. For what reasons does Dounia agree to marry Luzhin? How does Raskolnikov feel about her impending marriage? Why does she eventually break her engagement?
11. What do Svidrigailov's dreams about the young girl reveal about his character? Svidrigailov admits to Raskolnikov that he is afraid to die, why then does he decide to kill himself?
12. Cite two instances from the story supporting Raskolnikov's belief that fate or providence are helping him to carry out his plan to murder the pawnbroker.
13. List three vocabulary words to describe the character traits of each of the following characters from the story: Raskolnikov, Dounia, Luzhin, Sonia, Porfiry.

# Crime and Punishment

## Part I

### Chapter I

#### Vocabulary

**concertina** – a musical instrument similar to an accordion

**diminutive** – smaller; very small

**fastidiousness** – an attentiveness to detail

**ikon** – icon; a religious representation

**prevaricate** – to lie or evade the truth

**tantalizing** – tempting, enticing

1. Give a detailed account of Raskolnikov's appearance and physical condition.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

2. What evidence implies that Raskolnikov is suffering from some type of psychological condition?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

3. Raskolnikov's dream is significant because it reveals his tendency towards violence, but this is not the only connection that can be made. In what way is the dream a metaphor for the lifestyle of young women, such as Sonia, who are forced to live with poverty and alcoholism?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

4. What chance meeting in the Hay Market changes Raskolnikov's life forever, and how?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Chapter V

### Vocabulary

**amalgamate** – to join together into one; unite, combine  
**ascribed** – assigned to a supposed cause; attributed  
**carnage** – bloody and extensive slaughter  
**castigate** – to punish or rebuke severely  
**dissembler** – one who conceals under a false appearance  
**exactitude** – the quality of being precise  
**gesticulating** – making movements with the hand and arms  
**mawkish** – sentimental in a sickening way  
**phalanstery** – a socialist community  
**tirade** – a long vehement speech  
**transgressed** – overstepped

1. Briefly describe Porfiry. How does Porfiry imply that he believes Raskolnikov is involved in the murders?

---

---

---

---

---

---

2. Explain the socialist view of crime. Why does Razumihin disagree with this viewpoint? What is Porfiry's outlook on the nature of crime?

---

---

---

---

---

---

3. Porfiry discusses Raskolnikov's article about "the psychology of a criminal before and after the crime." What is the thesis of Raskolnikov's essay?

---

---

---

---

---

---