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Literature
Teaching Unit
Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



Crime and Punishment

by Fyodor Dostoevsky

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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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?

Chapter IV

Vocabulary

foretaste – a hint of something in the future

1. In a communist economy, ownership of property and business is shared by the community as a whole rather than by private individuals. The hope of such a system is to eradicate any and all social inequality. Cite instances of social injustice from this chapter which would indicate why communism became popular in Russia.

2. Why does Raskolnikov intervene between the young drunk girl and the “fat dandy” on the boulevard?

3. Raskolnikov, in an effort to protect the girl from danger, enlists the aid of a policeman. Suddenly, without any warning, Raskolnikov changes his mind about helping the girl and yells to the officer, “Let them be! What is it to do with you?” Explain Raskolnikov’s erratic behavior.

4. Describe Razumihin and his relationship with Raskolnikov. Why does Raskolnikov spontaneously decide to visit Razumihin?

Chapter II

Vocabulary

charlatanism – the pretense of expert knowledge or a skill that does not exist

cupola – a small dome on a roof

enigmatic – perplexing; baffling

sombre – somber; melancholy

1. Where does Raskolnikov decide to hide the stolen property?

2. Raskolnikov hides the stolen purse without checking to see how much money it contains. When he realizes what he has done, he asks:

“How is it I did not even glance into the purse and don’t know what I had there, for which I have undergone these agonies, and have deliberately undertaken this base, filthy, degrading business?”

How does Raskolnikov answer his question?

3. Why does Raskolnikov decide to visit Razumihin? How does Raskolnikov behave with his friend, and what is Razumihin’s reaction?

4. One theme in *Crime and Punishment* is the importance of Christian values in helping a person to rehabilitate. Find a passage in this chapter illustrating that Raskolnikov is not only isolated from his old friends, but he is also alienated from the church.
