

# INVESTIGATION: *Crime and Punishment*

---

Burke / AP English

## Overview

Every book explores different subjects. It is our interest in these subjects and our desire to answer them that guides our own reading. This assignment asks you to choose from a list of topics, each of which Fyodor Dostoevsky examines in detail through the actions and lives of his characters in *Crime and Punishment*. This assignment asks you to focus on this one subject throughout the novel, annotating and taking notes on it *as you read*. It will culminate in both a presentation and an essay in which you synthesize your findings and your own ideas about that subject. This unit will take a total of roughly eight weeks.

## Requirements

Each of you must, while reading *Crime and Punishment*:

- Choose from the topics listed below and write a thoughtful reflection (not more than a page) about your interest in this subject and your knowledge about it.
- Turn the subject into a guiding question that you will consider as you read and examine in the subsequent presentation and final paper; also, generate a list of questions about your topic to help you think about this subject.
- Investigate your subject online using Google, Wikipedia, the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, or other such sources. Print out evidence of what you read (e.g., the first page of a longer article that shows the title, source, subject) and add to your bibliography.
- Respond to these readings and incorporate your response to them into your final paper.
- Organize an online discussion group (through School Loop) that includes those who are investigating that same subject and contribute to the discussion at least *once* a week. As evidence of your participation, print them out and include your contributions to these discussions in the final paper.
- Annotate your copy of the text by underlining key passages and making notes in the margins. (Read with a pencil *not* a highlighter!)
- Participate in both full-class and small-group discussions about your topic.
- Write a paper (5–8 pages) in which you synthesize what Dostoevsky says and what you have learned about this subject, drawing from your notes, annotations, and reading to support and illustrate your ideas.
- Submit a bibliography of all articles, websites, and related sources (MLA format).

## The Topics

Although each of the following subjects is distinct, they often share common ground. Regardless of the topic you choose, consider the subject from as many sides as possible while reading and thinking about it. You should also consider possible dimensions, such as gender, values, ethics, and age, that might apply to each topic.

- Relationships
- Choices
- Faith
- Philosophy: existentialism, utilitarianism, nihilism, Nietzsche's "Superman"
- Psychology
- Social sciences: economics, sociology, political science
  - Status
  - Class
  - Values
- Law (Justice)