

## MWDS Extras for *Crime and Punishment*

**Include a Works Cited sheet for any resources used, including the novel.**

**Use 10pt. font. It's okay if boxes need to expand. Do not make any boxes smaller.**

### **Biographical Information about Author:**

We will watch a video/documentary on Friday that will give you some information for this section. Here's some additional information you can paraphrase.

In 1849, Dostoevsky himself was convicted of attempting to overthrow the government, and along with 15 other members of the socialist/nihilist Petrashevsky Circle, was sentenced to death. The men were actually led out into the freezing weather in their "pre-death" attire (white shirts), lined up against the wall where they were to be shot, and then at the last second with the first round of prisoners tied to the stakes, there was a reprieve. Nicholas 1 commuted their sentences to 4 years hard labor in Siberia, where the men endured horrific privations and abusive conditions. Dostoevsky later wrote that some of the men went insane because of the stress of the ordeal.

### **Characteristics of the Genre:**

*Crime and Punishment* is part of multiple genres—psychological thriller, gothic horror novel, fantastical realism.

Do a little research on the characteristics of these genres to determine how *C&P* fits.

### **Historical Information about the Period of Publication:**

*Crime and Punishment* is set in 1860s Russia, a turbulent time historically, and Dostoevsky depicts the squalor and poverty of St. Petersburg accurately. The novel was published serially in 1866 in a literary magazine.

The video we watch on Friday will also let you know a bit more about the social/political climate of this time period, which may provide you with some relevant information.

**Style:** Consider the close reading questions I've given you. Find a sample passage that illustrates your analysis of the author's style.

**Memorable Quotes:** You need at least 5. The significance should connect to one of the themes you wrote.

**Characters:** Raskolnikov, Razumihin, Pulcheria, Dounia, Sonia, Marmeladov, Katerina, Porfiry, Luzhin, Svidrigailov, Marfa, Nikolay, Lebeziatnikov, Alyona, Lizaveta

Consider also the root meanings of some of the character's name. You can find this information on the back of your summer assignment sheet.

"Role in the story" should be literal. "Significance" should be complex and should connect to the themes you wrote.

**Setting:** Be sure to discuss not only the actual setting, but how the setting influences the story and the characters. Consider St. Petersburg, the tavern where he meets Marmeladov in Ch. 1, Raskolnikov's apartment, and Alyona's apartment.

**Symbols:** You must include the following: the cross, dreams, and yellow. You may choose to include others, including Biblical allusions.

**Possible Themes:** You need at least 3.

**Old AP Questions:** Summarize each in a word or phrase.

1976 The conflict created when the will of an individual opposes the will of the majority is the recurring theme of many novels, plays, and essays. Select the work of an essayist who is in opposition to his or her society; or from a work of recognized literary merit, select a fictional character who is in opposition to his or her society. In a critical essay, analyze the conflict and discuss the moral and ethical implications for both the individual and the society.

1979 AP Question: Choose a complex and important character in a novel or a play of recognized literary merit who might--on the basis of the character's actions alone--be considered evil or immoral. In a well-organized essay, explain both how and why the full presentation of the character in the work makes us react more sympathetically than we otherwise might. Avoid plot summary.

1982 AP Question: In great literature, no scene of violence exists for its own sake. Choose a work of literary merit that confronts the reader or audience with a scene or scenes of violence. In a well-organized essay, explain how the scene or scenes contribute to the meaning of the complete work. Avoid plot summary.

1988 AP Question: Choose a distinguished novel or play in which some of the most significant events are mental or psychological; for example, awakenings, discoveries, changes in consciousness. In a well-organized essay, describe how the author manages to give these internal events the sense of excitement, suspense, and climax usually associated with external action. Do not merely summarize the plot.

1999 AP Question: The eighteenth-century British novelist Laurence Sterne wrote, "No body, but he who has felt it, can conceive what a plaguing thing it is to have a man's mind torn asunder by two projects of equal strength, both obstinately pulling in a contrary direction at the same time." From a novel or play choose a character (not necessarily the protagonist) whose mind is pulled in conflicting directions by two compelling desires, ambitions, obligations, or influences. Then, in a well-organized essay, identify each of the two conflicting forces and explain how this conflict within one character illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole.

2000 AP Question: Many works of literature not readily identified with the mystery or detective story genre nonetheless involve the investigation of a mystery. In these works, the solution to the mystery may be less important than the knowledge gained in the process of its investigation. Choose a novel or play in which one or more of the characters confront a mystery. Then write an essay in which you identify the mystery and explain how the investigation illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

2001 AP Question: One definition of madness is "mental delusion or the eccentric behavior arising from it." But Emily Dickinson wrote

Much madness is divinest Sense—  
To a discerning Eye—

Novelist and playwrights have often seen madness with a "discerning Eye." Select a novel or a play in which a character's apparent madness or irrational behavior plays an important role. Then write a well-organized essay in which you explain what this delusion or eccentric behavior consists of and how it might be judged reasonable. Explain the significance of the "madness" to the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

2002 AP Question: Morally ambiguous characters—characters whose behavior discourages readers from identifying them as purely evil or purely good—are at the heart of many works of literature. Choose a novel or play in which a morally ambiguous character plays a pivotal role. Then write an essay in which you explain how the character can be viewed as morally ambiguous and why his or her moral ambiguity is significant to the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.

2002 (B): Often in literature a character's success in achieving goals depends on keeping a secret and divulging it only at the right moment, if at all.

Choose a novel or play of literary merit that requires a character to keep a secret. In a well-organized essay, briefly explain the necessity for secrecy and how the character's choice to reveal or keep the secret affects the plot and contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.

2003: According to critic Northrop Frye, "Tragic heroes are so much the highest points in their human landscape that they seem the inevitable conductors of the power about them, great trees more likely to be struck by lightning than a clump of grass. Conductors may of course be instruments as well as victims of the divine lightning." Select a novel or play in which a tragic figure functions as an instrument of the suffering of others. Then write an essay in which you explain how the suffering brought upon others by that figure contributes to the tragic vision of the work as a whole.

2004: Critic Roland Barthes has said, "Literature is the question minus the answer." Choose a novel or play and, considering Barthes' observation, write an essay in which you analyze a central question the work raises and the extent to which it offers any answers. Explain how the author's treatment of this question affects your understanding of the work as a whole. Avoid plot summary.

2004 (B): The most important themes in literature are sometimes developed in scenes in which a death or deaths take place. Choose a novel or play and write a well-organized essay in which you show how a specific death scene helps to illuminate the meaning of the work as a whole.

2005 (B): One of the strongest human drives seems to be a desire for power. Write an essay in which you discuss how a character in a novel or a drama struggles to free himself or herself from the power of others or seeks to gain power over others. Be sure to demonstrate in your essay how the author uses this power struggle to enhance the meaning of the work.

2009: A symbol is an object, action, or event that represents something or that creates a range of associations beyond itself. In literary works a symbol can express an idea, clarify meaning, or enlarge literal meaning. Select a novel or play and, focusing on one symbol, write an essay analyzing how that symbol functions in the work and what it reveals about the characters or themes of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

2010: Palestinian American literary theorist and cultural critic Edward Said has written that "Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted." Yet Said has also said that exile can become "a potent, even enriching" experience. Select a novel, play, or epic in which a character experiences such a rift and becomes cut off from "home," whether that home is the character's birthplace, family, homeland, or other special place. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the character's experience with exile is both alienating and enriching, and how this experience illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

2011: In a novel by William Styron, a father tells his son that life "is a search for justice." Choose a character from a novel or play who responds in some significant way to justice or injustice. Then write a well-developed essay in which you analyze the character's understanding of justice, the degree to which the character's search for justice is successful, and the significance of this search for the work as a whole.