

Class 12 English Main Lesson: *Crime & Punishment*

Introduction to Main Lesson

Interestingly, there are some strong correlations between *In Cold Blood* and *Crime & Punishment* – but fear not lest you think we are doing more of the same... they are very different.

Primarily, the difference is that one is a (non)-fiction novel, whilst this is certainly a fictional novel with an incredibly detailed plot (although amazingly – the main event which Dostoevsky describes did actually happen, in a very similar incident right before he was to publish his book. (More to come on this.))

Crime & Punishment is regarded as one of the great works of literature of the 19th Century. It is one of the first works to really investigate the inner workings (psychology) of criminal mind/s (criminology); we will also touch on other areas such as history, society, politics and philosophy.

How the Main Lesson will run: The book is big (600+) pages, so we will not be reading it! I will provide summaries of each chapter (both in writing or audio, depending on your preference). These summaries will allow you to have a detailed picture of the plot of the text (it is a great story).

Once we start the book, most lessons you will study one ‘book’ or ‘section’ (which is actually 7 chapters!) – read the summary and answer a few questions. On top of this I will set some other tasks, including some research tasks, and a final ‘sentencing’ task where you get to play judge, jury (and executioner, if you wish).

There is also a really good two-part miniseries, but please don’t watch this yet – I will tell you when to watch it (so that it complements the book and doesn’t ruin it).

I will not give you too much work to do each day. I will aim for an average of half an hour a day – although some days might be 15-20 minutes, while other days might need a little more (not entirely sure, let’s see how it plays out).

While I have given the first 3 days’ work at once to start the Main Lesson – during the middle two weeks I will post work each day – so you will need to get into a habit of checking the website when you start your work day each day (again, there might only be 15 or so minutes of work for some of these days) **but it will work much better if you do the work each day, and hear a bit about the story each day, rather than all at once.**

The idea is that I want you to hear the story of the book – all the actions and events, which will take most of the Main Lesson (2 of the 3 weeks). The book is divided into 6 ‘Parts’ – each part has 5-7 Chapters. There is also an epilogue, which I think is 2 chapters.

We will spend more time on Part 1 than we do on the other parts, because it is where the characters and themes and ideas are introduced and developed. In terms of the plot, it has a different narrative function than the next 5 Parts.

I will upload a .pdf of the book, and I will ask you to read some parts of the book itself, so that you get a feel for the language and the inner workings of the mind of our protagonist:

Rodion Romanovitch Raskolnikov (usually referred to as Rodya, or Raskolnikov), as well as the genius of the dialogue; for me, the Russians, especially Dostoevsky, are masters of dialogue – and it is fascinating to hear how the different sections of Russian society spoke (at this time in the world). The upper class and intelligentsia prided themselves on their ability to **converse** – to be good conversationalists, and to be able to have an opinion on whatever they were talking about. During summer, Russians are known for having regular dinner parties that last until 3 in the morning, all based around the quality of conversation (and vodka).

There are many different characters in the book. I will provide a character list – I recommend to use it to remind you who is who! There are also a couple of cracking characters – ones that ‘stay with you’ (at least they have for me).

There will also be one or two illustrations to complete.

I will keep you updated on any changes to the work schedule due to our current viral climate.

I hope you will enjoy (and maybe learn a little).

Jake.