

Writing Topics/ Themes for Crime and Punishment

**"The best lack all conviction while
the worst are full of passionate intensity."
W.B. Yeats**

- Discuss the etiology of the crime. What are all of the possible explanations offered by the novel's characters and events? What is 'the extraordinary man' theory?
- Discuss the dreams in the novel and how they contribute to the meaning of the novel as a whole.
- Identify the motifs of this story. What do they reveal about the themes of this work?
- In what ways does irony contribute to the story's evolution?
- The human personality is multifaceted and complicated. In the novel, different characters act as mirrors to each other, revealing aspects of each other's personalities that would otherwise be buried or dismissed as somehow insignificant. We need to look beyond the facade of a human being into the deepest recesses of one's soul.
- The subconscious mind illuminates what the conscious mind tries to repress. It is important to be honest with oneself concerning motivation and to accept the consequences of one's actions.
- Human beings need companionship. Alienation and isolation from society can result in anti-social behavior.
- Suffering is unavoidable. We are born to suffer. Suffering is a means of expiating guilt. Suffering is also sacrifice and release.
- Unresolved guilt results in paranoid behavior.
- The body, the mind and the soul are one. Illness in one area will illuminate illness in another.
- Unconventional criminals need to be handled in unorthodox ways.
- People are products of their environment. Desperation forces people to do immoral things.

- Breaking a moral law demands punishment. We must conform to moral and legal laws or suffer the consequences.
- There are victims and victimizers everywhere, gender and class notwithstanding.
- Overweening pride can have disastrous results.
- Love and friendship are powerful forces. We need to love and be loved by others. Love is a great motivator. Love will lead us to be reborn.
- There is great beauty in kindness, honesty, integrity and unselfishness, though they be planted in the most depraved, dark corners of our lives.
- Time is relative.
- We need to recognize the sanctity of human life. Human beings are imperfect and they should not be judged hastily and harshly, especially by those of us unaware of their problems.