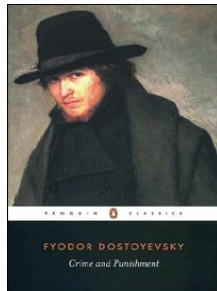


# Book Club Discussion Notes



## *Crime and Punishment*

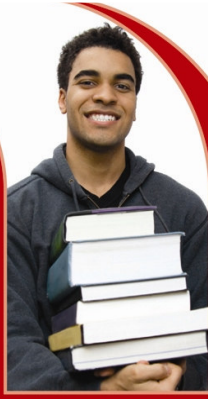
By Fyodor Dostoyevsky

### Author Biography

Fyodor Dostoyevsky was born 11 November 1821 in Moscow, Russia, and died 28 January 1881. Born as Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky, he was also known as Fyodor Dostoevski or Feodor Dostoyevsky. He is the 19th century Russian author who wrote the classic novels *Crime and Punishment* (1866) and *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880). Dostoyevsky turned to writing as a profession after a brief military career, publishing his first novel, *Poor Folk* in 1846. In 1849 he was arrested for his participation in a literary/political group and sentenced to prison. Although he narrowly escaped execution, he spent nearly ten years isolated in Siberia (four of them in prison) before returning to St. Petersburg. His novels explored the psychology and moral obligations of modern man, and he is famous for creating the "underground hero," a protagonist alienated from society and in search of redemption. One of Russia's greatest authors and a strong influence on 20th century literature, his other works include *House of the Dead* (1862), *Notes From The Underground* (1864) and *The Idiot* (1868). Dostoyevsky was born 30 October 1821 according to the Julian Calendar, 11 November 1821 in the Gregorian calendar.

### About the book

The brilliant and forensic precursor to modern crime writing, or another dreary and depressing Russian novel full of difficult to pronounce and remember names? This masterpiece of modern writing remains as contemporary and chilling in its psychological insights into the mind of one man among many as it did when first written by Dostoyevsky in serial form in 1866. The murder is one thing, but its effects upon the murderer opens a maelstrom of examination of the man, and in turn all mankind. It may be difficult, it may be long and full of those Russian names, but its rewards are many and rich.



# Book Club Discussion Notes

## Website:

[www.fyodordostoyevsky.com](http://www.fyodordostoyevsky.com)

## Other titles:

The House of the Dead  
Notes from Underground  
The Idiot  
The Gambler  
The Brothers Karamanzov

## Points for Discussion:

1. Can any similarities be seen between “Crime and Punishment” and modern crime novels by authors such as Patricia Cornwell and Michael Connelly? For example, the structure of having the murder placed early on in the narrative, with the reader knowing the details.
2. Did the readers feel any sympathy for the murder victim, or is she simply a narrative device rather than a fully-rounded character? What is the significance of the fact that she has no name in the novel?
3. Dostoyevsky wrote the novel for a Russian periodical in order to help alleviate his chronic gambling debts; can these kind of influences be detected in the text?
4. What can be made of the conclusion of the narrative? Is it, in the end, a redemptive tale?
5. Poverty plays a significant role in the novel; to what extent can Dostoyevsky be seen to be writing a social issues novel about a man pushed to the brink by his social situation? Does the novel justify murder in such circumstances?
6. Several of the characters belong to a class of poverty-stricken intellectuals; what view does Dostoyevsky’s novel take of such people?