



0. WHO WAS DOSTOEVSKY? - Story Preface

**1. WHO WAS DOSTOEVSKY?**

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In this image of the famous Russian writer, we see Dostoevsky as he appeared, circa 1847, when he was about 26 years old. Image online via Dartmouth College.

Who was [Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky](#) - the famous nineteenth-century Russian [writer](#) (the link is his signature) whose views about the human condition still resonate with twenty-first-century readers? Most people recognize his name or may have read one of his acclaimed books:

- [\*Crime and Punishment\*](#)

- [\*Notes From Underground\*](#)

- [\*The Devils\*](#)

(previously translated as *The Possessed*)

- [\*The Idiot\*](#)

- [\*The Brothers Karamazov\*](#)

(his final book and, for many readers, his masterpiece)

But what was Dostoevsky like? Where did he live? Whom did he marry? What were his eccentricities?

[His father](#), Mikhail Andreyevich, was the chief medical doctor at Moscow's [Hospital for the Poor](#) when his second son, Fyodor, was born there on October 30, 1821. [Maria Fyodorovna](#) was a gentle woman whose seven children adored her.

A word about the Russian "middle" name may be helpful here. It is called a "patronymic." A boy's patronymic often ends in "evich" or "ovich" which means "son of." A girl's patronymic usually ends in "evna" or "ovna" which means "daughter of." Mikhail Andreyevich is thus translated "Michael, son of Andre," and Maria Fyodorovna means "Maria, daughter of Theodore (the English equivalent of Fyodor)".

By 1831, an [apartment at the Hospital for the Poor](#) was no longer suitable for the growing family. In what would prove to be a disastrous purchase, Dr. Dostoevsky bought two small villages about 95 miles north of Moscow.

The family's [summer cottage](#) (called a [dacha](#) in Russian) at Darovoye (one of the two villages) became a place of joy for the children. Later, in his writings, Dostoevsky returned to the [site](#) of his childhood memories and recalled how much his parents had loved him.

Growing boys need proper schooling and, with the untimely death of their mother (from [tuberculosis](#)), Dr. Dostoevsky (in May of 1837) traveled with his two older sons (Mikhail and Fyodor) to [St. Petersburg](#), then [Russia's capital](#). The brothers were enrolled in the [Military Engineering College](#).

Thereafter, the future writer (who became a Lieutenant after graduation) was always identified with the beautiful city on the Neva River and not with Moscow, the place of his birth.

Let's take a virtual visit to St. Petersburg. What was it like in the nineteenth century? What is it like now?

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/WHO-WAS-DOSTOEVSKY-Dostoevsky>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/WHO-WAS-DOSTOEVSKY-Dostoevsky>

## Media Stream



Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky

Image online, courtesy the [dartmouth.edu](http://dartmouth.edu) website.

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Dostoevsky - Drawing of the Author as a Young Man

Image online, courtesy Dartmouth College website.

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Mikhail Andreyevich Dostoevsky

Image online, courtesy [dartmouth.edu](http://dartmouth.edu) website.

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### Hospital for the Poor - Moscow

Image online, courtesy Dartmouth College website.

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### Maria Fyodorovna - Mother of Dostoevsky

Image online, courtesy the Fyodor Dostoevsky Memorial Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia.

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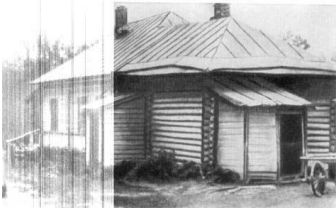
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### Dostoevsky Dacha

Image online, courtesy Dartmouth College website.

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### Dostoevsky's Family Dacha

Image online, courtesy Dartmouth College website.

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### Map Depicting St. Petersburg, Russia

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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### Aerial View of St. Petersburg

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

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### Military Engineering College - Dostoevsky's School

Image online, courtesy istmira.com website.

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### St. Petersburg - Former Capital of Russia

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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### Locator Map - Neva River

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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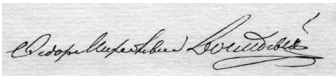


### Dostoevsky - Author of Crime and Punishment

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### Dostoevsky's Signature

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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### Map Depicting Saint Petersburg

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

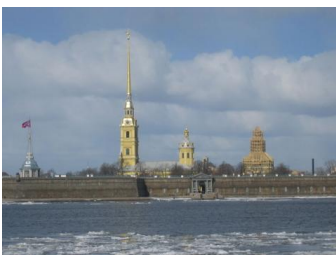
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### Map Depicting Moscow

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

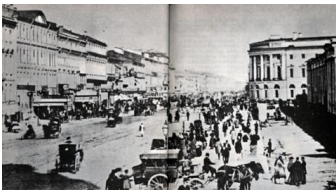
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### Neva River

Image online, courtesy the [esacademic.com](http://www.esacademic.com) website.

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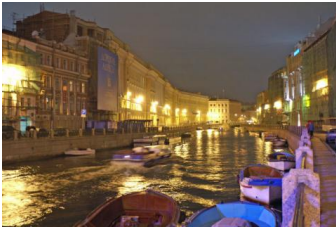


### Nineteenth Century Life in St. Petersburg

Image online, courtesy Dartmouth College website.

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### St. Petersburg Today

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### Dostoevsky - Boyhood Apartment in Moscow

Clip from RT's broadcast on Dostoevsky's boyhood home. Online, courtesy RT's Channel at YouTube.

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### Crime and Punishment - Raskolnikov Conceals the Crime

Clip from a highly acclaimed BBC adaptation of *Crime and Punishment*, starring [John Simm](#) (as Raskolnikov) and [Ian McDiarmid](#) (as Porfiry). Copyright, BBC, all rights reserved. Clip provided here as fair use for educational purposes and to acquaint new viewers with the program. Online, courtesy [BBC](#).

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### Crime and Punishment - Am I a Suspect?

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