

English 12/AP English Literature and Composition  
Paper topics: *Anna Karenina*

Proposal due: Friday 5 January

Source names and evidence of actual articles due: Tuesday 16 January

Informal outline and draft due: Tuesday 6 February

Final due for hot seat: Tuesday 13 February–Tuesday 27 February

(Keep an eye on tech week and the play; people involved in the play should work on the early end so as not to be clobbered by the tech week–paper combo. You will also have a full draft done a week earlier.)

Length: 5-8 pages

Sources: AP: 3-4 scholarly;

Grade level: 2 sources, at least 1 scholarly

You will write a paper of 5-8 pages on *Anna Karenina*. The longer format is designed to spring you from the Aristotelian five-paragraph essay, though you will use some of the elements you learned there to support your reading. You will use three to four outside scholarly sources to ground your work in the scholarly discourse. Please do not rely on commercial summaries for any portion of your work, including your finding episodes and passages; the provided study questions are a guide that allows you to accomplish that. While some sources are available on Google Scholar, you should have experience with college-level research before going to college, and the sources we find by using the more advanced or more focused databases will be more specific, sophisticated, and helpful. You must use the UMD databases to have completed this assignment.

Sourcework: We will go to the UMD library Wednesday, January 10, to use the databases for the purpose of finding sources for this paper. The class I give on Tuesday, January 9, will be very important to your understanding of database use and citation, and you should be sure to attend it.

Approaches to the paper:

1. You may use one of the critical approaches we discussed (psychoanalytical, mythological/archetypal, Marxist, American feminist, French feminist) to offer an analysis of some aspect of the text. Grade-level students may carefully step into biographical criticism; AP students may try reception theory, introduced today.
2. You may begin with your character study from the Parts 1–4 paper and expand it, with a meaningful thesis, to address deeper issues within the text. This study may be New Critical, with a nod to other New Critical analyses, and use source work to support your claims or as counterarguments. You may use a thesis that focuses on the relationships between characters, if you like, rather than one that deepens your understanding of a single character.

You may propose a topic of your own, with the following ideas to help you get started:

3. Point of view. Tolstoy's famous shifting third person allows for the psychological depth and texture of much of the text. Find out what the critics have to say about this narration, and use your findings to deepen your own ideas and observations about the text.

4. Interwoven plots. Tolstoy's text features a weave of the Anna plot with the Levin plot. What is the effect of the double plot; what happens at the intersections where the narration shifts between the plots; what is the effect of characters' crossing between plots?

5. Pacing and structure. How does Tolstoy manage the pacing and structure of the text to create a controlled, effective emotional response in the reader? How does the text maintain its fundamental emphases while also being so populated and diverse?

You'll notice the lack of topics where you can look at the beginning, middle, and end of the text to make an analysis. Please do not propose a topic like that or a topic where you can write just another paper of the kind you have always written in high school. Instead, please challenge yourself to maximize your learning; I will be happy to help you if you need to reconfigure or re-think any portion of the project.