

AP English Literature and Composition

Paper: *Anna Karenina* Parts 1–4

Length: 5 pages

Thesis and basic outline due: Tuesday, December 19

Hot seat opens: Thursday, January 4

Hot seat closes: Thursday, January 11

Paper due: Friday, January 12

Anna Karenina is widely considered to be the best novel ever written. Part of the reason for this acclaim is the psychological depth of the characters. Tolstoy never gives up on Anna or Stiva and never reduces Dolly or Karenin to type.

Make a claim about the psychological complexity of a character of your choice, and support that claim with evidence from the text. Decide what your claim is; be as specific as you can. We have discussed the ways in which characters are complex: sometimes the novel reveals complexity that has always existed; sometimes the character actually changes. **As you think through this topic, consider your particular claim (beyond “x is complex”) and the way the novel itself supports the claim through point of view, tone, imagery, syntax and diction (as we have them in translation), the structure of the novel, etc.**

As you consider the arrangement of your paper, you may move device by device or move chronologically through the novel. If you move chronologically, be careful of summarizing plot—plot summary is not acceptable at this level. Chronological order is warranted, though, as you are discussing the development of the character.

Practice first making claims that are intuitive to you, then think of how the novel supports the claims.

Consider a thesis that begins “Tolstoy develops...” Operating outside of the text and talking about what the text does in an analytical way gives you the distance to talk about what you see.

This paper need not be a five-paragraph essay, but it should have an introduction with a thesis, a body structure that is balanced and logical (though not necessarily tripartite), and a conclusion that pulls ideas together and makes clear how the exploration has been important.

While the novel is long, you have the tools you need to find what you are looking for. Use the provided study questions as a tool to see what is prominent or to suggest further ideas—or to find scenes in the text. Please stay away from summaries and study-aid (i.e., plagiarism-aid) sites too shady to be cited—you have what you need and should explore from within the novel itself. Take your time and explore what the novel offers.

Reminder:

*I will send around in advance the sign-up sheet for the hot seat and give everyone a chance to sign up for one meeting. After that, you may sign up as space permits, but I will not add appointments beyond those listed. Please plan ahead.