



WESTMINSTER
CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

A.P. ENGLISH SUMMER READING

Welcome to A.P. English! This summer you will read two novels for our class:

--Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*

-- Leif Enger's *Peace Like a River*

Because we will ask you to annotate *Anna Karenina*, you will need to purchase your own copy. Please do NOT begin either novel until you have fully familiarized yourself with the following assignments.

1. Russian Novel

A) Spend a few minutes researching the historical context in which Tolstoy wrote his works.

B) Read your way through *Anna Karenina*, occasionally annotating with a pen or pencil as you go. Here and there, jot down observations and questions in the margins, or underline passages you find intriguing. Please don't let this task become too onerous! You may use whatever marks or color systems work best for you, as long as they convey to us that you've followed the novel as you've progressed.

We agree with philosopher Mortimer Adler's observations about annotations, particularly with challenging books:

Why is marking up a book indispensable to reading? First, it keeps you awake. (And I don't mean merely conscious; I mean awake.) In the second place; reading, if it is active, is thinking, and thinking tends to express itself in words, spoken or written. The marked book is usually the thought-through book. Finally, writing helps you remember the thoughts you had, or the thoughts the author expressed (Adler, "How to Mark a Book").

A good rule of thumb is one mark or very brief note for every five to ten pages, though you're free to exceed this. Again, please don't allow this to grow so cumbersome that it detracts from your enjoyment of the novel.

C) Write a five-paragraph essay on **opposition** in the book and how this device contributes to the theme as a whole. In writing your essay, feel free to explore creative and interesting possibilities--this is not an assignment with "right" answers. **Just be sure to support your points with examples and quotes.**

As further clarification of this device and its variety of uses, Princeton's *Cracking the A.P.* offers this explanation:

OPPOSITION is any pair of elements that contrast sharply. This can be as blatant as night and day or be less obvious, such as the contrast between a naïve character and a sophisticated one. (Authors often introduce a **foil** for the very purpose of bringing a protagonist's traits into sharper focus in or through another character.) The **internal conflict** of a character who wants two totally opposite things at the same time is a classic case of opposition, as is the conflict inside a character who badly wants something that she just isn't cut out for. Opposition might be found in the **setting**, in a story that begins with a scene in a parlor but ends with a scene around a campfire.

Similarly, **time** often reveals sharp contrasts, when writers let the past stand as a counterpoint to the present: you'd see this in a story of a once-proud family who has fallen on hard times. An example of a **plot** contrast might be the scene of a celebratory dinner followed by a murder. Opposition sometimes can be found between the author's **style and his subject**; for example, a cerebral, intellectual style that's heavy on analysis in a story about a hog farmer would reveal humorous contrasts. **Irony**, of course, has at its core the disconnect between **expectations and reality**, as in Hamlet's Uncle acting compassionately, when in reality he murdered his brother. Keep an eye out for these and other elements that are in contrast to each other: they'll often lead you to the heart of the story.

2. *Peace Like a River*

Read the novel and *mark* or note passages you find particularly telling, poignant, or significant to the deeper meaning of the work. Then, choose one quote from the first third of the book, one from the middle third, and one from the last third. Copy the first quote and write a 1-3 paragraph explanation of why you think this quote is representative of the book. Then repeat the same process for the second and third quotes.

→ **RECAP: YOU WILL BE HANDING IN THE FOLLOWING ON THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS:**

- 1) YOUR ANNOTATED COPY OF THE RUSSIAN NOVEL
- 2) A FIVE-PARAGRAPH ESSAY ON OPPOSITION IN THE RUSSIAN NOVEL
- 3) THREE QUOTES AND THREE SHORT DISCUSSIONS FROM *PEACE LIKE A RIVER*.

Have fun! Happy reading! Have a great summer!