

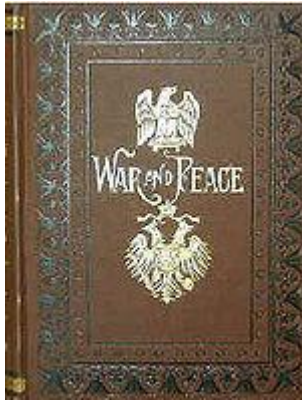
War and Peace

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This article is about the Tolstoy novel. For other uses, see [War and Peace \(disambiguation\)](#).

War and Peace



Author(s)	Leo Tolstoy
Original title	<i>Война и миръ</i> , (Voyná i mir, "Война и мир" in contemporary orthography)
Language	Russian , with some French
Genre(s)	Historical , Romance , War novel , Philosophical
Publisher	Russkii Vestnik (series)
Publication date	1869
Media type	Print (Hardback & Paperback) & Audio book
Pages	1,225 (first Published edition) ; 1,475 (2006 paperback issue)
ISBN	NA

War and Peace ([Russian](#): Война́ и мир, [Pre-reform Russian](#): «Война и миръ») is a [novel](#) by the [Russian](#) author [Leo Tolstoy](#), first published in 1869. The work is [epic](#) in scale and is regarded as one of the most important works of world literature.^{[1][2][3]} It is considered Tolstoy's finest literary achievement, along with his other major prose work [Anna Karenina](#) (1873–1877).

War and Peace delineates in graphic detail events surrounding the [French invasion of Russia](#), and the impact of the [Napoleonic era](#) on [Tsarist](#) society, as seen through the eyes of five [Russian aristocratic](#) families. Portions of an earlier version of the novel, then known as *The Year 1805*,^[4] were serialized in the magazine [The Russian Messenger](#) between 1865 and 1867. The novel was first published in its entirety in 1869.^[5] [Newsweek](#) in 2009 ranked it first in its list of the *Top 100 Books*.^[6]

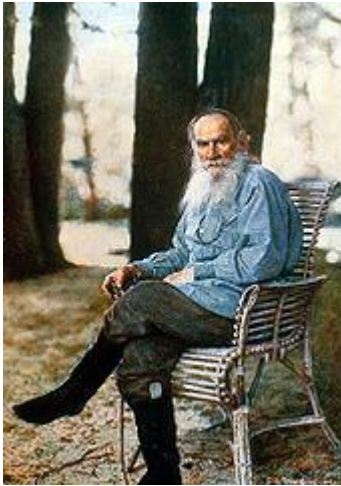
Tolstoy himself, somewhat enigmatically, said of *War and Peace* that it was "not a novel, even less is it a poem, and still less a historical chronicle." Large sections of the work, especially in the later chapters, are philosophical discussion rather than narrative.^[7] He went on to elaborate that the best Russian literature does not conform to standard norms. Tolstoy regarded *Anna Karenina* as the first of his novels.

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[\[edit\]](#) **Crafting the novel**



Only known color photograph of the writer, taken at his [Yasnaya Polyana](#) estate in 1908 by [Sergey Prokudin-Gorsky](#)



Tolstoy's notes from the ninth draft of *War and Peace*, 1864

War and Peace is well known as being one of the longest novels ever written, though not the [longest](#). It is actually the seventeenth longest novel ever written in a Latin or Cyrillic based alphabet and is subdivided into four books or volumes, each with sub parts containing many chapters.

Tolstoy came up with the title, and some of his themes, from an 1861 work of [Proudhon](#): *La Guerre et la Paix* ('War and Peace' in [French](#)). Tolstoy had served in the [Crimean War](#) and written a series of short stories and novellas featuring scenes of war.

He began writing *War and Peace* in the year that he finally married and settled down at his country estate. The first half of the book was written under the name "1805".

During the writing of the second half, he read widely and acknowledged [Schopenhauer](#) as one of his main inspirations. However, Tolstoy developed his own views of history and the role of the individual within it. ^[8]

The novel can be generally classified as [historical fiction](#). It contains elements present in many types of popular 18th and 19th century literature, especially the [romance novel](#). *War and Peace* attains its literary status by transcending genres.

Tolstoy was instrumental in bringing a new kind of consciousness to the novel. His narrative structure is noted for its "god-like" ability to hover over and within events, but also in the way it swiftly and seamlessly portrayed a particular character's point of view. His use of visual detail is often cinematic in its scope, using the literary equivalents of panning, wide shots and close-ups, to give dramatic interest to battles and ballrooms alike. These devices, while not exclusive to Tolstoy, are part of the new style of the novel that arose in the mid-19th century and of which Tolstoy proved himself a master.^[9]


[\[edit\]](#) Realism

Tolstoy incorporated extensive historical research. He was also influenced by many other novels.^[8] A [veteran](#) of the [Crimean War](#), Tolstoy was quite critical of standard history, especially the standards of [military history](#), in *War and Peace*. Tolstoy read all the standard histories available in Russian and French about the [Napoleonic Wars](#) and combined more traditional historical writing with the novel form. He explains at the start of the novel's third volume his own views on how history ought to be written. His aim was to blur the line between fiction and history, in order to get closer to the truth, as he states in Volume II.

The novel is set 60 years earlier than the time at which Tolstoy wrote it, "in the days of our grandfathers", as he puts it. He had spoken with people who had lived through war during the [French invasion of Russia](#) in 1812, so the book is also, in part, accurate [ethnography](#) fictionalized. He read letters, journals, autobiographical and biographical materials pertaining to Napoleon and the dozens of other historical characters in the novel. There are approximately 160 real persons named or referred to in *War and Peace*.^[10]

[\[edit\]](#) Reception



 Front page of *War and Peace*, first edition, 1869 (Russian)

The first draft of *War and Peace* was completed in 1863. In 1865, the periodical *Russkiy Vestnik* published the first part of this early version under the title *1805*. In the following year, it published more of the same early version. Tolstoy was dissatisfied with this version, although he allowed several parts of it to be published with a different ending in 1867, still under the same title "1805". He heavily rewrote the entire novel between 1866 and 1869.^{[5][8]} Tolstoy's wife, [Sophia Tolstaya](#), wrote as many as seven separate complete manuscripts by hand before Tolstoy considered it again ready for publication.^[8] The version that was published in *Russkiy Vestnik* had a very different ending from the version eventually published under the title *War and Peace* in 1869.

The completed novel was then called *Voyna i mir* (new style orthography; in English *War and Peace*).


The 1805 manuscript (sometimes referred to as "the original War and Peace") was re-edited and annotated in [Russia](#) in 1983 and since has been translated separately from the "known" version, to [English](#), [German](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#), [Dutch](#), [Swedish](#), [Finnish](#), [Albanian](#), and [Korean](#). The fact that so many extant versions of *War and Peace* survive make it one of the best insights into the mental processes of a great novelist.

Russians who had read the serialized version were anxious to acquire the complete first edition, which included epilogues, and it sold out almost immediately. The novel was translated almost immediately after publication into many other languages.

[Isaak Babel](#) said, after reading *War and Peace*, "If the world could write by itself, it would write like Tolstoy."^[11] Tolstoy "gives us a unique combination of the 'naive objectivity' of the oral narrator with the interest in detail characteristic of realism. This is the reason for our trust in his presentation."^[12]

[\[edit\]](#) Language



 Cover of *War and Peace*, Italian translation, 1899

Although Tolstoy wrote most of the book, including all the narration, in Russian, significant portions of dialogue (including its opening paragraph) are written in [French](#) with characters often switching between the two languages. This reflected 19th century Russian aristocracy, where French, a foreign tongue, was widely spoken and considered a language of prestige and more refined than Russian.^[13] This came about from the historical influence throughout Europe of the powerful court of the Sun King, [Louis XIV of France](#), leading to members of the Russian aristocracy being less competent in speaking their mother tongue. In *War and Peace*, for example, Julie Karagina, Princess Marya's friend, has to take Russian lessons in order to master her native language.

It has been suggested^[14] that it is a deliberate literary device employed by Tolstoy, to use French to portray artifice and insincerity as the language of the theater and deceit while Russian emerges as a language of sincerity, honesty and seriousness. It displays slight irony that as Pierre and others socialize and use French phrases, they will be attacked by legions of Bonapartists in a very short time. It is sometimes used in satire against Napoleon. In the novel, when Pierre proposes to Hélène, he speaks to her in French — *Je vous aime* ('I love you'). When the marriage later emerges to be a sham, Pierre blames those French words.

The use of French diminishes as the book progresses and the wars with the French intensify, culminating in the capture and eventual burning of [Moscow](#). The progressive elimination of French from the text is a means of demonstrating that Russia has freed itself from foreign cultural domination.^[14] It is also, at the level of plot development, a way of showing that a once-admired and friendly nation, France, has turned into an enemy. By midway through the book, several of the Russian aristocracy, whose command of French is far better than their command of Russian, are anxious to find Russian tutors for themselves.

[edit] English and other translations

War and Peace has been translated into many languages. It has been translated into English on several occasions, starting with Clara Bell working from a French translation. The translators [Constance Garnett](#) and [Louise and Aylmer Maude](#) knew Tolstoy personally. Translations have to deal with Tolstoy's often peculiar syntax and his fondness for repetitions. About 2% of *War and Peace* is in French; Tolstoy removed the French in a revised 1873 edition, only to restore it later.^[14] Most translators follow Garnett retaining some French, Briggs uses no French, while Pevear-Volokhonsky and Amy Mandelker's revision of the Maude translation both retain the French fully.^[14] (For a list of translations see below)

[Abdulla Qahhor](#) and his wife Kibriyo Qahhorova translated *War and Peace* into [Uzbek](#).^[15]

[edit] Background and historical context



 In 1812 by the Russian artist [Illarion Pryanishnikov](#)

The novel begins in the year 1805 during the reign of Tsar [Alexander I](#) and leads up to the 1812 [French invasion of Russia](#) by [Napoleon](#). The era of [Catherine the Great](#) (from 1762–1796), when the royal court in [Paris](#) was the centre of western European civilization,^[16] is still fresh in the minds of older people. Catherine, fluent in French and wishing to reshape Russia into a great European nation, made French the language of her royal court. For the next one hundred years, it became a social requirement for members of the Russian nobility to speak French and understand French culture.^[16] This historical and cultural context in the aristocracy is reflected in *War and Peace*. Catherine's grandson, Alexander I, came to the throne in 1801 at the age of 24. In the novel, his mother, [Marya Feodorovna](#), is the most powerful woman in the Russian court.

War and Peace tells the story of five [aristocratic](#) families — the Bezukhovs, the Bolkonskys, the Rostovs, the Kuragins and the Drubetskoys—and the entanglements of their personal

lives with the history of 1805–1813, principally Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812. The Bezukhovs, while very rich, are a fragmented family as the old Count, Kirill Vladimirovich, has fathered dozens of illegitimate sons. The Bolkonskys are an old established and wealthy family based at Bald Hills. Old Prince Bolkonsky, Nikolai Andreevich, served as a general under Catherine the Great, in earlier wars. The [Moscow](#) Rostovs have many estates, but never enough cash. They are a closely knit, loving family who live for the moment regardless of their financial situation. The Kuragin family has three children, who are all of questionable character. The Drubetskoy family is of impoverished nobility, and consists of an elderly mother and her only son, Boris, whom she wishes to push up the career ladder.

Tolstoy spent years researching and rewriting the book. He worked from primary source materials (interviews and other documents), as well as from history books, philosophy texts and other historical novels.^[8] Tolstoy also used a great deal of his own experience in the [Crimean War](#) to bring vivid detail and first-hand accounts of how the Russian army was structured.^[17]

The standard Russian text of *War and Peace* is divided into four books (fifteen parts) and an [epilogue](#) in two parts – one mainly narrative, the other thematic. While roughly the first half of the novel is concerned strictly with the fictional characters, the later parts, as well as one of the work's two epilogues, increasingly consist of [essays](#) about the nature of war, power, [history](#), and [historiography](#). Tolstoy interspersed these essays into the story in a way that defies previous fictional convention. Certain abridged versions remove these essays entirely, while others, published even during Tolstoy's life, simply moved these essays into an [appendix](#).

[\[edit\]](#) Plot summary

War and Peace has a large cast of characters, the majority of whom are introduced in the first book. Some are actual historical figures, such as Napoleon and Alexander I. While the scope of the novel is vast, it is centered around five aristocratic families. The plot and the interactions of the characters take place in the era surrounding the 1812 [French invasion of Russia](#) during the [Napoleonic wars](#).^[18]

[\[edit\]](#) Book/Volume One



Empress dowager, [Maria Feodorovna](#), mother of reigning Tsar Alexander I, is the most powerful woman in the Russian royal court, in the historical setting of the novel.

The novel begins in July 1805 in [Saint Petersburg](#), at a [soirée](#) given by Anna Pavlovna Scherer — the [maid of honour](#) and confidante to the [queen mother Maria Feodorovna](#). Many of the main characters and aristocratic families in the novel are introduced as they enter Anna Pavlovna's salon. [Pierre \(Pyotr Kirilovich\) Bezukhov](#) is the illegitimate son of a wealthy [count](#), an elderly man who is dying after a series of strokes. Pierre is about to become embroiled in a struggle for his inheritance. Educated abroad at his father's expense following his mother's death, Pierre is essentially kindhearted, but socially awkward, and owing in part to his open, benevolent nature, finds it difficult to integrate into Petersburg society. It is known to everyone at the soirée that Pierre is his father's favorite of all the old count's illegitimate children.

Also attending the soiree is Pierre's friend, the intelligent and sardonic Prince Andrei Nikolayevich Bolkonsky, husband of Lise, the charming society favourite. Finding Petersburg society unctuous and disillusioned with married life after discovering his wife is empty and superficial, Prince Andrei makes the fateful choice to be an [aide-de-camp](#) to Prince [Mikhail Ilarionovich Kutuzov](#) in the [coming war](#) against [Napoleon](#).

The plot moves to [Moscow](#), Russia's ancient city and former capital, contrasting its provincial, more Russian ways to the highly mannered society of Petersburg. The Rostov family are introduced. Count Ilya Andreyevich Rostov has four adolescent children. Thirteen-year-old Natasha (Natalia Ilyinichna) believes herself in love with Boris Drubetskoy, a disciplined young man who is about to join the army as an officer. Twenty-year-old Nikolai Ilyich pledges his teenage love to Sonya (Sofia Alexandrovna), his fifteen-year-old cousin, an orphan who has been brought up by the Rostovs. The eldest child of the Rostov family, Vera Ilyinichna, is cold and somewhat haughty but has a good prospective marriage in a Russian-German officer, Adolf Karlovich Berg. Petya (Pyotr Ilyich) is nine and the youngest of the Rostov family; like his brother, he is impetuous and eager to join the army when of age. The heads of the family, Count Ilya Rostov and Countess Natalya Rostova, are an affectionate couple but forever worried about their disordered finances.

At Bald Hills, the Bolkonskys' country estate, Prince Andrei departs for war and leaves his terrified, pregnant wife Lise with his eccentric father Prince Nikolai Andreyevich Bolkonsky and his devoutly religious sister Maria Nikolayevna Bolkonskaya.

The second part opens with descriptions of the impending Russian-French war preparations. At the [Schöngraben engagement](#), Nikolai Rostov, who is now conscripted as [ensign](#) in a squadron of [hussars](#), has his first taste of battle. He meets Prince Andrei, whom he insults in a fit of impetuosity. Even more than most young soldiers, he is deeply attracted by [Tsar Alexander](#)'s charisma. Nikolai gambles and socializes with his officer, Vasily Dmitrich Denisov, and befriends the ruthless and perhaps psychopathic Fyodor Ivanovich Dolokhov.

[\[edit\]](#) **Book/Volume Two**

Burdened with [nihilistic](#) disillusionment, Prince Andrei does not return to the army but chooses to remain on his estate, working on a project that would codify military behavior to solve problems of disorganization responsible for the loss of life on the Russian side. Pierre visits him and brings new questions: where is God in this [amoral](#) world? Pierre is interested in [panentheism](#) and the possibility of an [afterlife](#).

Pierre's estranged wife, Hélène, begs him to take her back, and against his better judgment he does. Despite her vapid shallowness, Hélène establishes herself as an influential hostess in Petersburg society.


Prince Andrei feels impelled to take his newly written military notions to Petersburg, naively expecting to influence either the Emperor himself or those close to him. Young Natasha, also in Petersburg, is caught up in the excitement of dressing for her first grand ball, where she meets Prince Andrei and briefly reinvigorates him with her vivacious charm. Andrei believes he has found purpose in life again and, after paying the Rostovs several visits, proposes marriage to Natasha. However, old Prince Bolkonsky, Andrei's father, dislikes the Rostovs, opposes the marriage, and insists on a year's delay. Prince Andrei leaves to recuperate from his wounds abroad, leaving Natasha initially distraught. She soon recovers her spirits, however, and Count Rostov takes her and Sonya to spend some time with a friend in Moscow.

Natasha visits the Moscow [opera](#), where she meets Hélène and her brother Anatol. Anatol has since married a Polish woman whom he has abandoned in Poland. He is very attracted to Natasha and is determined to seduce her. Hélène and Anatol conspire together to accomplish this plan. Anatol kisses Natasha and writes her passionate letters, eventually establishing plans to elope. Natasha is convinced that she loves Anatol and writes to Princess Maria, Andrei's sister, breaking off her engagement. At the last moment, Sonya discovers her plans to elope and foils them. Pierre is initially horrified by Natasha's behavior, but realizes he has fallen in love with her. During the time when the [Great Comet of 1811–2](#) streaks the sky, life appears to begin anew for Pierre.

Prince Andrei accepts coldly Natasha's breaking of the engagement. He tells Pierre that his pride will not allow him to renew his proposal. Ashamed, Natasha makes a suicide attempt and is left seriously ill.

[\[edit\]](#) Book/Volume Three



 The [Battle of Borodino](#), fought on September 7, 1812 and involving more than 250,000 troops and 70,000 casualties was a pivotal turning point in Napoleon's failed campaign to take Russia. It is vividly depicted in great detail through the plot and characters in *War and*

Peace.

Painting by [Louis-François, Baron Lejeune](#), 1822.

With the help of her family, especially Sonya, and the stirrings of religious faith, Natasha manages to persevere in Moscow through this dark period. Meanwhile, the whole of Russia is affected by the coming confrontation between Napoleon's troops and the Russian army. Pierre convinces himself through [gematria](#) that Napoleon is the [Antichrist](#) of the [Book of Revelation](#). Old prince Bolkonsky dies of a stroke while trying to protect his estate from French marauders. No organized help from any Russian army seems available to the Bolkonskys, but Nikolai Rostov turns up at their estate in time to help put down an incipient peasant revolt. He finds himself attracted to Princess Maria, but remembers his promise to Sonya.

Back in Moscow, the war-obsessed Petya manages to snatch a loose piece of the Tsar's biscuit outside the [Cathedral of the Assumption](#); he finally convinces his parents to allow him to enlist.

Napoleon himself is a main character in this section of the novel and is presented in vivid detail, as both a thinker and would-be strategist. His *toilette* and his customary attitudes and traits of mind are depicted in detail. Also described are the well-organized force of over 400,000 French Army (only 140,000 of them actually French-speaking) which marches quickly through the Russian countryside in the late summer and reaches the outskirts of the city of [Smolensk](#). Pierre decides to leave Moscow and go to watch the [Battle of Borodino](#) from a vantage point next to a Russian artillery crew. After watching for a time, he begins to join in carrying ammunition. In the midst of the turmoil he experiences firsthand the death and destruction of war. The battle becomes a hideous slaughter for both armies and ends in a standoff. The Russians, however, have won a moral victory by standing up to Napoleon's reputedly invincible army. For strategic reasons and having suffered grievous losses, the Russian army withdraws the next day, allowing Napoleon to march on to Moscow. Among the casualties are Anatol Kuragin and Prince Andrei. Anatol loses a leg, and Andrei suffers a grenade wound in the abdomen. Both are reported dead, but their families are in such disarray that no one can be notified.

[\[edit\]](#) Book/Volume Four



 Napoleon's retreat from Moscow. Painting by [Adolf Northern](#) (1828–1876)

The Rostovs have waited until the last minute to abandon Moscow, even after it is clear that Kutuzov has retreated past Moscow and Muscovites are being given contradictory, often

propagandistic, instructions on how to either flee or fight. Count Rostopchin is publishing posters, rousing the citizens to put their faith in religious icons, while at the same time urging them to fight with pitchforks if necessary. Before fleeing himself, he gives orders to burn the city. The Rostovs have a difficult time deciding what to take with them, but in the end, Natasha convinces them to load their carts with the wounded and dying from the Battle of Borodino. Unknown to Natasha, Prince Andrei is amongst the wounded.

When Napoleon's [Grand Army](#) finally occupies an abandoned and burning [Moscow](#), Pierre takes off on a [quixotic](#) mission to assassinate [Napoleon](#). He becomes an anonymous man in all the chaos, shedding his responsibilities by wearing peasant clothes and shunning his duties and lifestyle. The only people he sees while in this garb are Natasha and some of her family, as they depart Moscow. Natasha recognizes and smiles at him, and he in turn realizes the full scope of his love for her.

Pierre saves the life of a French officer who fought at Borodino, yet is taken prisoner by the retreating French during his attempted assassination of [Napoleon](#), after saving a woman from being raped by soldiers in the French Army. He becomes friends with a fellow prisoner, Platon Karataev, a peasant with a saintly demeanor, who is incapable of malice. In Karataev, Pierre finally finds what he has been seeking: an honest person of integrity (unlike the aristocrats of Petersburg society) who is utterly without pretense. Pierre discovers meaning in life simply by living and interacting with him. After witnessing French soldiers sacking Moscow and shooting Russian civilians arbitrarily, Pierre is forced to march with the Grand Army during its disastrous retreat from Moscow in the harsh Russian winter. After months of trial and tribulation—during which the fever-plagued Karataev is shot by the French—Pierre is finally freed by a Russian raiding party, after a small skirmish with the French that sees the young Petya Rostov killed in action.

Meanwhile, Andrei, wounded during Napoleon's invasion, has been taken in as a casualty and cared for by the Rostovs, fleeing from Moscow to [Yaroslavl](#). He is reunited with Natasha and his sister Maria before the end of the war. Having lost all will to live, he forgives Natasha in a last act before dying.

As the novel draws to a close, Pierre's wife H  l  ne dies from an overdose of [abortion](#) medication (Tolstoy does not state it explicitly but the euphemism he uses is unambiguous). Pierre is reunited with Natasha, while the victorious Russians rebuild Moscow. Natasha speaks of Prince Andrei's death and Pierre of Karataev's. Both are aware of a growing bond between them in their bereavement. With the help of Princess Maria, Pierre finds love at last and, revealing his love after being released by his former wife's death, marries Natasha.

[\[edit\]](#) Epilogue in two parts

The first part of the epilogue begins with the wedding of Pierre and Natasha in 1813. It is the last happy event for the Rostov family, which is undergoing a transition. Count Rostov dies soon after, leaving his eldest son Nikolai to take charge of the debt-ridden estate.

Nikolai finds himself with the task of maintaining the family on the verge of bankruptcy. His abhorrence at the idea of marrying for wealth almost gets in his way, but finally he marries the now-rich Maria Bolkonskaya and in so doing also saves his family from financial ruin.

Nikolai and Maria then move to Bald Hills with his mother and Sonya, whom he supports for the rest of their life. Buoyed by his wife's fortune, Nikolai pays off all his family's debts. They also raise Prince Andrei's orphaned son, Nikolai Andreyevich (Nikolenka) Bolkonsky.


As in all good marriages, there are misunderstandings, but the couples—Pierre and Natasha, Nikolai and Maria—remain devoted to their spouses. Pierre and Natasha visit Bald Hills in 1820, much to the jubilation of everyone concerned. There is a hint in the closing chapters that the idealistic, boyish Nikolenka and Pierre would both become part of the [Decembrist Uprising](#). The first epilogue concludes with Nikolenka promising he would do something with which even his late father "would be satisfied..." (presumably as a [revolutionary](#) in the Decembrist revolt).

The second part of the epilogue contains Tolstoy's critique of all existing forms of mainstream history. He attempts to show that there is a great force behind history, which he first terms divine. He offers the entire book as evidence of this force, and critiques his own work. God, therefore, becomes the word Tolstoy uses to refer to all the forces that produce history, taken together and operating behind the scenes.


[\[edit\]](#) Principal characters in *War and Peace*

Main article: [List of characters in War and Peace](#)



 *War and Peace* character tree



 Natasha Rostova by [Elisabeth Boehm](#)

- [Count Pyotr Kirillovich \(Pierre\) Bezukhov](#) — The large-bodied, ungainly, and socially awkward illegitimate son of an old Russian grandee. Pierre, educated abroad, returns to Russia as a misfit. His unexpected inheritance of a large fortune makes him socially desirable. Pierre is the central character and often a voice for Tolstoy's own beliefs or struggles.
- [Prince Andrei Nikolayevich Bolkonsky](#) — A strong but cynical, thoughtful and philosophical *aide-de-camp* in the [Napoleonic Wars](#).
- [Princess Maria Nikolayevna Bolkonskaya](#) — A pious woman whose eccentric father attempted to give her a good education. The caring, nurturing nature of her large eyes in her otherwise thin and plain face are frequently mentioned.
- Count Ilya Andreyevich Rostov — The [pater-familias](#) of the Rostov family; terrible with finances, generous to a fault.
- Countess Natalya Rostova — Wife of Count Ilya Rostov, mother of the four Rostov children.
- [Countess Natalia Ilyinichna \(Natasha\) Rostova](#) — A central character, introduced as "not pretty but full of life" and a romantic young girl, she evolves through trials and suffering and eventually finds happiness. She is an accomplished singer and dancer.
- [Count Nikolai Ilyich Rostov](#) — A [hussar](#), the beloved eldest son of the Rostov family.
- [Sofia Alexandrovna \(Sonya\) Rostova](#) — Orphaned cousin of Vera, Nikolai, Natasha, and Petya Rostov.
- Countess Vera Ilyinichna Rostova — Eldest of the Rostov children, she marries the German career soldier, Berg.
- [Pyotr Ilyich \(Petya\) Rostov](#) — Youngest of the Rostov children.
- Prince Vasily Sergeyevich Kuragin — A ruthless man who is determined to marry his children well, despite having doubts about the character of some of them.
- [Princess Elena Vasilyevna \(Hélène\) Kuragin](#) — A beautiful and sexually alluring woman who has many affairs, including (it is rumoured) with her brother Anatole.
- [Prince Anatol Vasilyevich Kuragin](#) — Hélène's brother and a very handsome and amoral pleasure seeker who is secretly married yet tries to elope with Natasha Rostova.
- Prince Ipolit Vasilyevich — The eldest and perhaps most dim-witted of the Kuragin children.
- Prince Boris Drubetskoy — A poor but aristocratic young man driven by ambition, even at the expense of his friends and benefactors, who marries for money, rather than love, an heiress, Julie Karagina.
- Princess Anna Mikhailovna Drubetskaya — The mother of Boris.
- Fyodor Ivanovich Dolokhov — A cold, almost psychopathic officer, he ruins Nikolai Rostov by luring him into an outrageous gambling debt (by which he, Dolokhov, profits), he only shows love to his doting mother.
- Adolf Karlovich Berg — A young Russian officer, who desires to be just like everyone else.
- Anna Pavlovna Sherer — Also known as Annette, she is the hostess of the salon that is the site of much of the novel's action in Petersburg.
- Maria Dmitryevna Akhrosimova — An older Moscow society lady, she is an elegant dancer and trend-setter, despite her age and size.
- Amalia Evgenyevna Bourienne — A French woman who lives with the Bolkonskys, primarily as Princess Marya's companion.
- Vasily Dmitrich Denisov — Nikolai Rostov's friend and brother officer, who proposes to Natasha.

- Platon Krataev – The archetypal good Russian peasant, whom Pierre meets in the prisoner of war camp.
- [Napoleon I of France](#) — the Great Man, whose fate is detailed in the book.
- [General Mikhail Ilarionovich Kutuzov](#) — Russian commander-in-chief throughout the book. His diligence and modesty eventually save Russia from Napoleon.^{[[citation needed](#)]}
- Osip Bazdeyev — the [Freemason](#) who interests Pierre in his mysterious group, starting a lengthy subplot.^{[[citation needed](#)]}
- [Tsar Alexander I of Russia](#) — He signed a [peace treaty](#) with Napoleon in 1807 and then went to war with him.

Many of Tolstoy's characters in *War and Peace* were based on real-life people known to Tolstoy himself. His grandparents and their friends were the models for many of the main characters, his great-grandparents would have been of the generation of Prince Vasily or Count Ilya Rostov. Some of the characters, obviously, are actual historic figures.

[\[edit\]](#) Adaptations

[\[edit\]](#) Film

The first Russian adaptation was *Война и мир* (*Voyna i mir*) in 1915, which was directed by [Vladimir Gardin](#) and starred Gardin and the Russian ballerina [Vera Karalli](#). F. Kamei produced a version in Japan in 1947.

The [208-minute long American 1956 version](#) was directed by [King Vidor](#) and starred [Audrey Hepburn](#) (Natasha), [Henry Fonda](#) (Pierre) and [Mel Ferrer](#) (Andrei). Audrey Hepburn was nominated for a [BAFTA Award](#) for best British actress and for a [Golden Globe Award](#) for best actress in a drama production.

The critically acclaimed [four-part 1965 Russian version](#) by the [Soviet](#) director [Sergei Bondarchuk](#) was released in stages from 1965–1967 and as a re-edited whole in 1968. It starred [Lyudmila Savelyeva](#) (as Natasha Rostova) and [Vyacheslav Tikhonov](#) (as Andrei Bolkonsky). Bondarchuk himself played the character of Pierre Bezukhov. The film was almost seven hours long; it involved thousands of actors, 120 000 extras, and it took seven years to finish the shooting, as a result of which the actors age changed dramatically from scene to scene. It won an [Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film](#) for its authenticity and massive scale.^{[[19](#)]} The film is considered the best screen version of the novel.

[\[edit\]](#) Television

War and Peace (1972): The [BBC](#) (British Broadcasting Corporation) made a television serial based on the novel, broadcast in 1972–73. [Anthony Hopkins](#) played the lead role of Pierre. Other lead characters were played by [Rupert Davies](#), [Faith Brook](#), [Morag Hood](#), [Alan Dobie](#), [Angela Down](#) and [Sylvester Morand](#). This version faithfully included many of Tolstoy's minor characters, including Platon Karataev ([Harry Locke](#)).^{[[20](#)][[21](#)]}

La guerre et la paix (2000): French TV production of [Prokofiev's](#) opera *War and Peace*, directed by François Roussillon. [Robert Brubaker](#) played the lead role of Pierre.^{[[22](#)]}

War and Peace (2007): produced by the Italian Lux Vide, a TV mini-series in Russian & English co-produced in Russia, France, Germany, Poland and Italy. Directed by [Robert Dornhelm](#), with screenplay written by Lorenzo Favella, Enrico Medioli and [Gavin Scott](#). It features an international cast with [Alexander Beyer](#) playing the lead role of Pierre assisted by [Malcolm McDowell](#), [Clémence Poésy](#), [Alessio Boni](#), [Pilar Abella](#), [J. Kimo Arbas](#), [Ken Duken](#), [Juozapas Bagdonas](#) and [Toni Bertorelli](#).^[23]

[\[edit\]](#) Opera

Initiated by a proposal of the German director [Erwin Piscator](#) in 1938, the Russian composer [Sergei Prokofiev](#) composed his opera *War and Peace* (Op. 91, libretto by Mira Mendelson) based on this epic novel during the 1940s. The complete musical work premiered in [Leningrad](#) in 1955. It was the first opera to be given a public performance at the [Sydney Opera House](#) (1973).^[24]

[\[edit\]](#) Theatre

The first successful stage adaptations of *War and Peace* were produced by [Alfred Neumann](#) and [Erwin Piscator](#) (1942, revised 1955, published by Macgibbon & Kee in London 1963, and staged in 16 countries since) and R. Lucas (1943).

A stage adaptation by [Helen Edmundson](#), first produced in 1996 at the [Royal National Theatre](#), was published that year by Nick Hern Books, London. Edmundson added to and amended the play^[25] for a 2008 production as two 3-hour parts by [Shared Experience](#), directed by [Nancy Meckler](#) and [Polly Teale](#).^[26] This was first put on at the [Nottingham Playhouse](#), then toured in the UK to Liverpool, Darlington, Bath, Warwick, Oxford, Truro, London (the [Hampstead Theatre](#)) and Cheltenham.

[\[edit\]](#) Radio

The [BBC Home Service](#) broadcast an eight-part adaptation by Walter Peacock from 17 January to 7 February 1943 with two episodes on each Sunday. All but the last instalment, which ran for one and a half hours, were one hour long. [Leslie Banks](#) played Pierre while [Celia Johnson](#) was Natasha.

In December 1970, [Pacifica Radio](#) station [WBAI](#) broadcast a reading of the entire novel (the 1968 [Dunnigan](#) translation) read by over 140 celebrities and ordinary people.^[27]

A dramatised full-cast adaptation in 20 parts, edited by Michael Bakewell, was broadcast by the BBC. Transmission Times: 30.12.1969 to 12.5.1970 Cast included: David Buck, Kate Binchy, Martin Jarvis

A dramatised full-cast adaptation in ten parts was written by Marcy Kahan and Mike Walker in 1997 for [BBC Radio 4](#). The production won the 1998 Talkie award for Best Drama and was around 9.5 hours in length. It was directed by Janet Whitaker and featured Simon Russell Beale, Gerard Murphy, Richard Johnson, and others.^[28]

[\[edit\]](#) Music

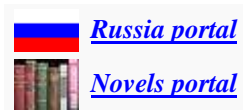
Composition by [Nino Rota](#)^[29]

Referring to album notes, the first track "[The Gates of Delirium](#)", from the album [Relayer](#), by the progressive rock group [Yes](#), is said to be based loosely on the novel.^[30]

[\[edit\]](#) Full translations into English

- Clara Bell (from a French version) (1885–86)
- [Nathan Haskell Dole](#) (1898)
- [Leo Wiener](#) (1904)
- [Constance Garnett](#) (1904)
- [Aylmer and Louise Maude](#) (1922–3)
- [Rosemary Edmonds](#) (1957, revised 1978)
- [Ann Dunnigan](#) (1968)
- Anthony Briggs (2005)
- [Andrew Bromfield](#) (2007), translation of the first completed draft, approx. 400 pages shorter than other English translations
- [Richard Pevear](#) and [Larissa Volokhonsky](#) (2007)
- Maude translation revised by Amy Mandelker, Oxford University Press (2010) [ISBN 978-0199232765](#)

[\[edit\]](#) See also



- [List of characters in War and Peace](#)
- [List of historical novels](#)
- *Natasha's Dance* by [Orlando Figes](#), a cultural history of Russia using the name of the main female character^[31]

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