



War and peace

Leo Tolstoy

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War and Peace is a novel by the Russian author Leo Tolstoy, first published in its entirety in 1869. Epic in scale, it is regarded as one of the central works of world literature. 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*, were serialized in the magazine *The Russian Messenger* between 1865 and 1867. The novel was first published in its entirety in 1869. Newsweek in 2009 ranked it first in its list of the Top 100 Books. In 2003, the novel was listed at number 20 on the BBC's survey *The Big Read*. Tolstoy himself, somewhat enigmatically, said of War and Peace that it is "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. He went on to elaborate that the best Russian literature does not conform to standards and hence hesitated to call War and Peace a novel. (Instead, Tolstoy regarded *Anna Karenina* as his first true novel.

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