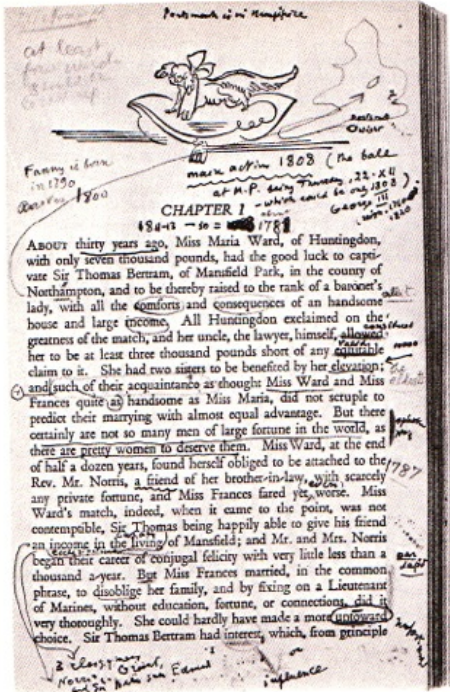


The Nabokov Project: Essay Questions



Mansfield Park by Jane Austen (1811-1813)

Especially in dealing with Fanny's reactions, Austen uses a device Nabokov calls a knight's move, a term from chess to describe a sudden swerve to one or other side of the board of Fanny's chequered emotions. Identify and document the use of the knight's move in the passage concerning Sir Thomas's departure for Antigua.

Prominent in Austen's style is what Nabokov likes to call the special dimple, achieved by furtively introducing into the sentence a bit of irony between the components of a plain informative statement. List and analyze the dimpled sentences in the novel.

Produce a map of England locating the action of Mansfield Park.

Bleak House by Charles Dickens (1852-1853)

Every character has his attribute, a kind of colored shadow that appears whenever the person appears. Integrate a list of these colored shadows into the list of characters in your copy of the book.

Give the structural scheme of Bleak House in terms of its main thematic centers and their interconnecting lines.

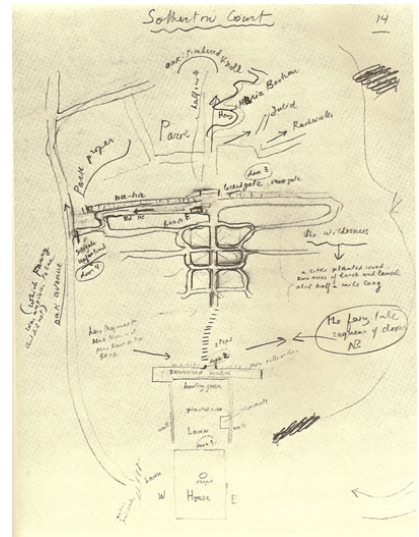
Follow Mr. Guppy through Bleak House.

Ulysses by James Joyce (1922)

Ulysses is a fat book of more than two hundred and sixty thousand words; it is a rich book with a vocabulary of about thirty thousand words. Discuss some of them.

Make notes on the Bloom's house at 7 Eccles Street.

Throughout the book people keep running into each other – paths meet, diverge, and meet again. Document the use of synchronization in the novel.



The Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka (1915)

Sketch the layout of the Samsa flat.

Investigate what species of insect Gregor might be. Draw him, noting the differences from a regular insect.

Divide the story into scenes or segments. Analyze their relationship to one another.

Describe the use of slow-motion in the story.

Make notes on the number three in the story.

Describe the opening and closing of doors.

Madame Bovary by Gustave Flaubert (1856)

Discuss Flaubert's use of the word 'and'.

The features of Fanny Price and Esther are pleasantly blurred. Not so with Emma. Describe her eyes, hair, hands, skin.

Swann's way by Marcel Proust (1913)

Take a sheet of paper. Write at the top: Marcel Proust 1871-1922. Now divide the paper. On the left you will write the literal translations of the titles. On the right the more or less fancy translations that Moncrieff inflicted upon Proust. Discuss.

Map the streets of Combray.

There is a concentration of summer color, heat, and a garden with a book in the middle. Explore how the book merges with Marcel, the reader.

Diagram the theme of the two walks.

