



# All Quiet on the Western Front

Erich Maria Remarque

Teacher's Guide

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## Synopsis

### Chapter 1

Resting five miles from the western front two weeks after the Second Company has faced front-line duty, Paul Baumer, an eighteen-year-old infantryman, along with comrades Tjaden and Müller, enjoys a full belly and tobacco, which Paul received in a trade with Kaczkinsky. Ginger the cook tries to withhold rations for a full company after the loss of seventy men makes extra portions available, but the company commander intercedes. Content, Paul and the others relish sleep. He observes, "Fourteen days is a long time at one stretch."

Paul reflects on fellow soldiers: Albert Kropp, a clear thinker; Müller, serious physics student; Leer, bearded and lusting for girls. Himself he describes as a member of the quartet who volunteered from the same graduating class. The others standing in line for food share their camaraderie: Tjaden, a locksmith; Haie Westhus, peat digger; Detering, the married farmer; and Stanislaus "Kat" Kaczkinsky, 40-year-old group leader and chief scrounger.

The men receive mail and newspapers. At Kropp's mention of Kantorek, their former schoolmaster, the men laugh. Paul compares him to Corporal Himmelstoss, the "terror of Klosterberg" and recalls how Kantorek convinced his classes to join the German army and how Joseph Behm was one of the first to die. Paul regrets that young men fall prey to faulty leadership.

Paul, Kropp, and Müller visit Franz Kemmerich at the dressing station and find him feebly cheerful, unaware that his foot has been amputated, and obviously dying. Müller tactlessly negotiates for Kemmerich's soft airman's boots. On the way out, Paul bribes an orderly to give Franz a dose of painkiller. Müller ponders the fate of the boots after Franz dies; Paul dreads writing to Franz's mother. The boys grow bitter at Kantorek's comment about "Iron Youth," a meaningless slogan. They realize that they have already abandoned adolescence.

### Chapter 2

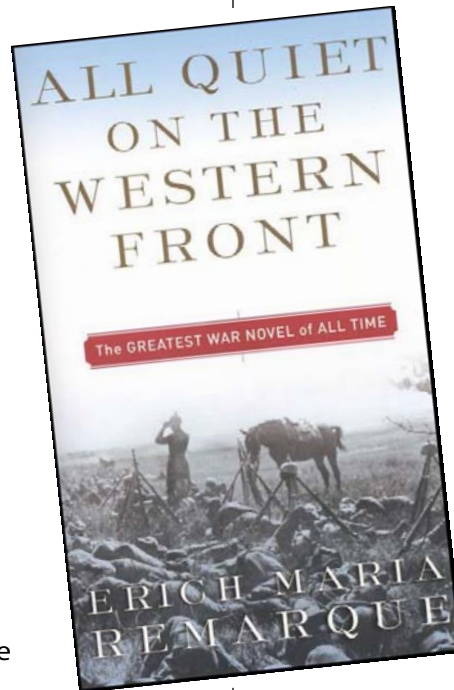
Paul thinks of home and rationalizes Müller's desire for the boots. He reminisces about his group's innocence as all twenty enlisted with the district-commandant. Within three weeks, basic training deflates their romantic notions of the military. Under the unflinching discipline of Himmelstoss, their drill instructor, Platoon No. 9 learns to cope with senseless harassment. Paul acknowledges that constant toughening makes them "hard, suspicious, pitiless, and vicious," essential qualities of a soldier,

and that the experience increases group loyalty.

On a visit to Bed 26, Paul tries to uplift Kemmerich's gray mood. The patient, aware that he is an amputee, doubts that he will survive. Paul resents that his frail boyhood friend is dying, then suggests that Franz might convalesce at Klosterberg. An hour later, Paul frenziedly pleads for an orderly's help, then returns to find Franz dead. Paul collects personal belongings and identification tag and delivers Franz's boots to Müller.

### Chapter 3

Reinforcements arrive, including men younger than Paul and his friends. Paul contemplates how



insignificant men become bullies when given military authority. After Himmelstoss arrives at the front, Tjaden, Haie, and Paul waylay him and wreak vengeance with kicks and punches. Their former tormentor crawls away, leaving the young men to claim the title of “young heroes.”

#### **Chapter 4**

Moving closer to the front to lay wire, Paul’s company grows tense at nine o’clock in the evening as the English batteries open fire an hour earlier than usual. Men hurl themselves to the ground as though second sight warns them of impending doom. In the murky light, they go about their job, frequently illuminated by rockets firing overhead. While waiting for trucks to collect them at dawn, they snatch a bit of sleep.

The barrage worsens, forcing the men into a graveyard, where exploding shells dislodge coffins. Kat shouts a warning of poison gas; Paul dons protective face gear and pull a similar mask on an unresponsive recruit. As the shelling ceases, Paul observes the wrecked cemetery, hedge, and railroad. The recruit that Paul aided earlier lies nearly unconscious, his hip splintered. Kat suggests shooting the victim. More soldiers arrive before he can carry out the euthanasia. Wearing, the infantry, stooping to avoid overhead telephone wires, moves on.

#### **Chapter 5**

The group discusses what they will do when peace comes. Haie vows he will stay in the army for twelve years, retire, and become a village police officer. Detering worries about his wife working the family farm alone. Himmelstoss joins the group. Tjaden needles him. Himmelstoss demands respect for his superior rank. The men ignore him. Returning to their conversation, the former schoolmates count the war’s toll on their group: seven dead, four wounded, and one insane. Albert concludes that the war has ruined them.

The sergeant-major demands Tjaden’s whereabouts. The men refuse to answer the question and return to playing cards. That evening, at a tribunal before Lieutenant Bertinck, Paul testifies that Tjaden was insubordinate to Himmelstoss because of incidents during basic training when Himmelstoss tormented two bedwetters by making them share a bunk. Bertinck lectures

Himmelstoss, then sentences Tjaden to three days open arrest in a chicken coop. For complicity, Kropp draws a one-day sentence. Kat and Paul purloin two geese from regimental headquarters and they cook a late-night meal.

#### **Chapter 6**

Amid rumors of an offensive, the group jokes darkly about a stockpile of new coffins. The British have strengthened their artillery with trench mortars. German artillery barrels are so worn that shells fall on German troops. Paul ponders the role of fate in who dies and who survives.

The men wait for a dawn attack. Kat grows morose. Rumors insist that the enemy will use tanks and low-flying planes on the next attack. Even worse, there may be flamethrowers. Another night in the dugout has recruits vomiting with tension. Others are wary that fear is catching. One soldier succumbs to claustrophobia, froths in a fit, and must be subdued by force. Another is blown to bits while fleeing the dugout’s stifling confinement.

As artillery fire falls behind the dugout, the men prepare for an onslaught by the French. In the desperate combat that ensues, foot soldiers lose their humanity in the struggle for survival. The men fall back to more stable positions, surprising the enemy with their fierce resistance. As the evening mists arise, Paul performs sentry duty and thrills to the comforting grace of surrounding poplars, which lose their beauty when he connects them with scenes of battle.

The next day, souvenir hunters retrieve parachute silk and copper bands. Larks and butterflies contrast the carnage. Soldiers pile corpses three layers deep in shell holes. Recruits are most likely to die because of their lack of experience and survival skills. Veteran soldiers tutor them on how to stay alive. Haie suffers a brutal wound in the back. As autumn replaces summer, only thirty-two of the original 150 members of Company Two survive.

#### **Chapter 7**

Paul’s outfit enjoys better food after getting on good terms with Himmelstoss, a substitute for Ginger the cook, who is on leave. Paul names the dead, dying, and maimed among his comrades. He and his friends turn to grim humor as a release of tensions. A poster depicting a pretty girl reminds

Paul and Kropp of the world beyond the battlefield.

The men board near a canal, where they swim and flirt with three French girls who are openly receptive and point out their house. Ferrying gifts of food in their boots, they swim over and awaken the girls, who chatter incomprehensibly in French. Paul falls deliriously into the arms of the brunette.

Paul receives a seventeen-day pass, to be followed by training on the moors. He bids farewell to the brunette, then, deloused for the journey, boards a train home. Like a stranger, he hears his sister calling to his mother and breaks into tears. He realizes that his mother is seriously ill. To questions about food and danger, he reassures her with lies. Alone with his sister, he learns that his mother's cancer has recurred. On the way to the commandant's office, Paul fails to salute a major, who berates him. The day spoiled by tedious military protocol, Paul sheds his uniform and squeezes into too-tight civilian clothes.

Relaxing at the beer garden with first his father, then with his German teacher and a headmaster, Paul avoids war talk. He admits to himself that he no longer fits in with noncombatants, who can't understand combat. While visiting Mittelstaedt, Paul is delighted to learn that Kantorek has been drafted. Mittelstaedt reports their conversation, emphasizing an exchange about Kantorek's influence on Behm, an early war casualty. Mittelstaedt contrasts Kantorek's slovenliness with the spruce military attire of Boettcher, who had been school porter.

When only four days remain of Paul's leave, he must visit Kemmerich's mother. To her hysteria and questions about how Franz died, Paul lies that his friend died instantly. The last night of leave, Paul's mother sits by his bed and warns him about French women. Again, Paul lies, assuring her there are no such women near his company. He wishes that he had not come home at all.

### **Chapter 8**

For a month, Paul relocates in a training camp on the moors near the Soldiers' Home and enjoys autumn and nature. At a nearby Russian prisoner of war camp, he empathizes with inmates, who look more like ordinary people than enemies. They

trade boots and rough carvings for bread. Peasants taunt them by eating full meals in front of them. Paul enjoys Russian violin music and attends an inmate's funeral. He wishes to befriend the dispirited prisoners. The last Sunday before his departure to the front, Paul visits his father and sister, who come to the camp to say goodbye. They discuss his mother's admittance to Luisa Hospital for cancer treatment.

### **Chapter 9**

Paul travels toward his company, which he must trace to its new location. Rumor reports that they are bound for Russia. Spiffed up in new tunic and exasperated by parade drill, Paul perceives the reason for the change—the Kaiser is coming to inspect them. After the Kaiser's departure, the men discuss how wars begin and how propaganda spreads international hatred.

Near battle once more, Paul finds scattered human remains, the bodies blown clear of their uniforms. He volunteers to reconnoiter the enemy position. The return to action leaves Paul jumpy and disoriented until he recalls his duty to comrades. A French infantryman falls into a crater beside him; Paul stabs him with a small dagger, but all night and through the day the man clings to life. Wracked with guilt, Paul stares at the dying soldier, opens his collar, and offers him water. At three in the afternoon, the man dies.

Paul speaks to the corpse, pleading his remorse and begging forgiveness. Overhead, bullets from both sides impede Paul's retreat. He considers writing the victim's wife and searches the man's wallet for information. A letter, photo, and bank book indicate that Paul has killed Gerard Duval, a printer. At dark, Paul scrambles on toward his company, wary that he may be accidentally shot by Germans. Kat and Albert move toward him with a stretcher. Unable to hold back, he relates the episode with Duval. With Kat's help, Paul concludes philosophically, "After all, war is war."

### **Chapter 10**

While guarding a deserted village, Paul and his buddies scrounge for blankets, eggs, butter, and pigs. With a homemade grater they make potato cakes. Smoke from the chimney draws enemy fire. The men transport their loot to the dugout and eat all day. Eight days later, the company boards trucks

for a return to the front. They carry with them their loot: a four-poster bed, coverlets, chairs, and food-stuffs. As the column marches through a deserted village, Kropp is wounded in the knee. Paul realizes that he, too, is wounded in the leg and arm. They board a field ambulance for transport to a dressing station. Paul grows violent as his wound is probed. He and Albert bribe the surgeon with cigars so that they can remain together. Paul is uncomfortable in the roofless station in the rain and on the train ride to Cologne. Unaccustomed to clean, ironed sheets, he falls out of bed on the way to the latrine, yet hesitates to tell the Red Cross nurse why he is out of bed. To remain with Albert, Paul holds a match under a thermometer to drive up the reading and complains of pain.

At the Catholic Hospital at seven the next morning, Paul and his roommates resent staff prayers, which disturb their sleep. During the night, Albert's wound hemorrhages. Josef informs the others about the Dead Room, where the dying are taken in their final hours. Paul undergoes an operation. Kropp's leg is amputated at the thigh. A blind man tries to commit suicide with a fork. Peter, who is ferried against his will to the Dead Room, returns in triumph. Johann Lewandowski makes love to his wife, Marja, while the other men play cards and keep a lookout for the nuns. Paul, hesitant to leave Albert, returns home on leave, where his mother's possessiveness saddens him.

**Chapter 11**

Returned to action, Paul and the others blank out the terrors of frontline duty. The men become utterly pragmatic about survival; some are crazed by the constant barrage. Detering, entranced by budding cherry blossoms, foolishly deserts and is apprehended by field police. Müller is fatally wounded in the stomach and bequeaths to Paul the boots he got from Kemmerich. Their adulterated rations run short; the men bleed from dysentery; fraud and incompetence permeate the military. Bertinck heroically sacrifices himself while knocking out a flame-thrower. Leer bleeds to death from a hip wound. As the hellish summer of 1918 drags on, Paul longs for life and fears death. British and American aircraft outnumber German planes five to one. Rain and mud deter the infantry.

After Kat is wounded in the shin, Paul hurries him

to the aid station. He recalls that the two have been friends for nearly three years and asks for Kat's address, then moves on toward medical help. The orderly pronounces Kat dead from a splinter to the skull, which he received in transit. Overcome with fatigue and grief, Paul faints.

**Chapter 12**

Of the original coterie of classmates, only Paul survives. He is slightly injured by gas and enjoys two weeks' rest before returning to the front. He regrets the sufferings that devastated his generation, both physically and spiritually. Yearning to survive, he feels alone and doomed. In October 1918, Paul dies. His expression suggests that he has found peace.

**World War I Timeline**

**1914**

- June 28** Serbian-backed terrorists assassinate Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary.
- July 28** Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia.
- July 29** Russia declares war on Austria-Hungary.
- Aug. 1** Germany declares war on Russia.
- Aug. 3** France goes to war with Germany.
- Aug. 4** Great Britain declares war on Germany after Belgium is invaded.
- Aug. 7** British troops land in Belgium and France.
- Aug. 24** German army invades France.
- Aug. 31** Germans under Von Hindenburg defeat Russian army at Tannenberg.
- Sept. 6-10** French stop German attack on Paris at the First Battle of the Marne.
- Oct. 19** First battle of Ypres begins.
- Oct. 29** Turkey enters the war as Germany's ally.
- Nov. 5** Great Britain and France declare war on Turkey.
- Nov. 22** First Battle of Ypres ends; British stop German advance into Belgium.
- December** Allied offensives on Western Front fail; trench warfare begins.

**1915**

- Feb. 18** Germans begin submarine "blockade" of British Isles.
- March** British declare blockade of Germany.
- April 22** Germans use poison gas during the Second Battle of Ypres (April 22-May 25).
- May 7** German submarine sinks British passen-

ger liner Lusitania, with loss of 1,152 lives, including 102 Americans. Anti-German sentiment grows in the United States.

**Fall** Both sides suffer heavy casualties during the battles of Champagne and Artois, but fail to break stalemate on the Western Front.

**1916**

**Feb. 21** Germans attack French fortress at Verdun.

**April 19** United States warns Germany to stop attacking merchant ships without warning.

**May 15** British capture Vimy Ridge.

**May 31** German and British fleets clash at Jutland; battle is inconclusive but British retain control of the seas.

**July 1** British use tanks for the first time at the Battle of the Somme (July 1-Nov 18).

**Aug. 28** Italy declares war on Germany.

**Nov. 18** Battle of Verdun ends. Germans suffer 434,000 casualties to French losses of 543,000.

**Dec. 26** Germany proposes a peace conference.

**Dec. 30** French government rejects German proposal.

**1917**

**February** Germany begins unrestricted submarine attacks that result in the loss of 134 ships.

**Feb. 3** United States severs diplomatic relations with Germany.

**Feb. 28** Zimmerman Telegram, a German proposal for an alliance with Mexico against the United States, is made public.

**March 18** Germans retreat to new positions along the Hindenburg Line.

**April 6** United States declares war on Germany.

**June 21** British attack at the Third Battle of Ypres (June 21-Nov. 20) bogs down in heavy mud. British suffer 400,000 casualties to 65,000 German losses.

**June 26** U.S. troops arrive in France.

**Oct. 23** First American troops enter combat against Germans.

**Nov. 20** British use massed tank attacks at the battle of Cambrai (Nov. 20-Dec. 4).

**1918**

**March 21** Germans launch major offensive in an effort to gain a decisive victory before American troops can be used in large numbers.

**April 6** Allies stop German offensive.

**May 27** Germans launch new offensive.

**May 29** U.S. troops halt German attack at the Marne River.

**July 15** Third Battle of the Marne: Germans launch their final offensive.

**Aug. 6** Allies launch counterattack against Germans.

**Aug. 8** Third Marne ends with Germans pushed back to the Hindenburg Line; German High Command loses its will to fight.

**Sept. 12** Americans capture German positions at St. Mihiel.

**Sept. 26** Allies launch offensive at Meuse-Argonne.

**Sept. 27** British break through Hindenburg Line.

**October** Germans are in constant retreat.

**Nov. 9** Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicates.

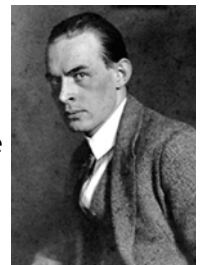
**Nov 11** Armistice declared.

**1919**

**June 28** The Treaty of Versailles is signed.

**Author Sketch**

Erich Maria Remarque was born Erich Paul Remark on June 22, 1898, in Osnabrück, Westphalia, in northwestern Germany, 25 miles from the Dutch border; he was the son of Peter Remark, a German book-binder, and his wife, Anna Maria, both descendants of devout French Catholic refugees to the Rhineland following the French Revolution (his ancestors originally spelled their family name "Remarque," which the author revived in later years). Living in poverty, the family moved almost yearly between 1898 and 1912. Nicknamed "Smudge" for his bookish ways, Remarque and his sisters, Elfriede and Erna, attended the Catholic Preparande, where he often came in conflict with his teachers, particularly Prof. Kanschorek, the prototype for the character Kantorek. To earn money for school clothes and supplies, Remarque gave piano lessons. During limited free time he collected butterflies, hiked,



and wrote in his journal.

In November 1916, while in his third year of education courses at the University of Münster, Remarque was called up for military service and trained at Osnabrück's Westerberg Camp, from which he received frequent emergency leaves to visit his dying mother. Frontline duty shattered his enthusiasm and optimism, particularly after the death of his buddy Troske, who, like Kat, was treated for minor shrapnel wounds, but died of a head injury that medics had overlooked. Remarque's military experience, which forms the core of *All Quiet on the Western Front*, included five wounds, the last of which threatened his lungs. In September 1917, while Remarque recuperated at St. Vincenz Hospital in Duisburg, a few miles west of Essen, his mother died.

After his discharge in 1918, Remarque suffered disorientation, disillusionment about nationalism and patriotism, and extreme sadness over the loss of his mother. He abandoned his original middle name—Paul—and adopted his mother's name in its place. For ten years he was unable to settle into a profession. A pathetic member of what Gertrude Stein termed the "lost generation," he completed veteran's training school and in 1919 worked as a substitute teacher west of Osnabrück. Bored with this job, he played the organ in a mental institution and carved monuments for a local cemetery, then roved Germany with a bohemian caravan.

Remarque eventually returned to middle class aspirations, settled in Berlin, and served as a test driver and ad writer for the Berlin Tire Company. After developing an interest in racetracks and auto mechanics, he became a reporter and assistant editor at *Sportbild*, a Swiss magazine, and in 1920 published poems, essays, and his first novel, a humiliating failure. To escape embarrassment, Remarque adopted his great-grandfather's spelling of the family name. In 1925, the author married actress Ilse Jutta Zambona, who suffered from tuberculosis. The marriage was stormy from the start and subsequently ended in divorce.

Remarque's breakthrough came with his famous anti-war novel, *Im Westen Nichts Neues*, translated in English as *All Quiet on the Western Front*. The novel, which he wrote in four weeks as an attempt to exorcise memories and dreams of the war, was

rejected by eighteen publishing houses but subsequently became an international bestseller. It was published in German in 1928 and in English in 1929.

Although publishing success made Remarque a rich man, it did not bring him contentment or shield him from suffering. In 1931, with the Nazis rising to power, he left Germany for good, buying a villa in Switzerland and pursuing an elitist lifestyle for which he was ridiculed; he and Ilsa subsequently divorced, in 1932. Remarque hated Nazism, and the hatred was mutual: the Nazis embarked on a campaign of defamation against Remarque, and in 1933 his books were banned in Germany and burned publicly, along with those of such other great German thinkers as Thomas Mann and Albert Einstein (Remarque himself was burned in effigy in Berlin). Remarque's German citizenship was revoked in 1938 (the same year he remarried Ilsa). Embittered by this rejection, he moved with his wife to the United States in 1939, where both became naturalized citizens in 1947. While living in New York during World War II, Remarque learned that his sister, Elfriede Scholtz, a housewife and mother who had remained in Germany, had been executed by the Nazis in a blatant act of retaliation against him. During her trial in the *Volksgeschichtshof* ("People's Court") on trumped-up charges of "undermining morale," the court president declared, "Your brother has unfortunately escaped us—you, however, will not escape us." Elfriede was guillotined in December of 1943.

After a period living in New York, Remarque moved to Hollywood and lived there for four years, becoming a war commentator and screenwriter. Though married to Ilsa, he was often seen accompanying screen beauties. He also courted friendships with such notables as Charlie Chaplin, Cole Porter, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Ernest Hemingway (with whom he is often compared for his obsession with war trauma). Remarque and his first wife were eventually divorced for good, and in 1958, he married French-born movie star Paulette Goddard. The two moved to Locarno, Switzerland. By this time Remarque was weakened by heart disease, but continued to live the fast-paced life of a socialite. He died of an aortic aneurysm on September 25, 1970, in Locarno.

## Critic's Corner

Like Stephen Crane and Ernest Hemingway, Remarque belongs among the classic authors of war literature. Thrust into a generation "hard, ... afraid of feelings, without trust in anything but the sky, trees, the earth, bread, tobacco that never played false to any man," he transformed his post-war torment into one of the landmark pacifist novels of all time. He felt vindicated when the book became an immediate success, selling a million and a half copies within the year and going into translation in thirty-nine languages within three years. He earned favorable reviews by such giants as William Faulkner, Quentin Reynolds, Maxwell Geismar, and Bernard DeVoto for inventing the anti-war novel and for impressing on a militaristic world that war is hideously destructive. Germans, responsible for the majority of early sales, raised a barrage of protests, accusing the author of pacifist bias and of romanticizing battlefield survival techniques in order to make money. Remaining cool to adulation and criticism, the author refused to justify his position and receded into private literary aims over a forty-year span. Overall, he received few tangible awards, including membership in the German Academy of Speech and Poetry and the German Grand Cross of Merit. The year after his death, his hometown named a road after him.

Two years after *All Quiet* hit the bestseller list, it was filmed by Universal Studios. Starring Lew Ayres as Paul, the film won two Oscars: for best picture and for Lewis Milestone's direction. Additional nominations went to scriptwriters Maxwell Anderson, Del Andrews, and George Abbott, and to photographer Arthur Edson. The final scene of the movie fades out on a close-up of Paul's hand grasping a butterfly. Labeled by Halliwell's Film Guide as "a landmark of American cinema and Universal's biggest and most serious undertaking until the sixties," the film received raves from the National Board of Review. Variety magazine suggested that the League of Nations "buy up the master-print, reproduce it in every language to be shown to every nation every year until the word war is taken out of the dictionaries." *All Quiet on the Western Front* was revived in 1979 with a TV movie starring Richard Thomas as Paul, Ernest Borgnine as Kat, and Patricia Neal as Paul's mother.

## Selected Other Works by Erich Maria Remarque

*The Road Back* (1931)  
*Three Comrades* (1937)  
*Flotsam* (1941)  
*Arch of Triumph* (1946)  
*Spark of Life* (1952)  
*A Time to Love and a Time to Die* (1954)  
*The Black Obelisk* (1957)  
*The Last Act* (screenplay, 1955)  
*The Last Station* (stage play, 1956, published posthumously as *Full Circle*, 1974)  
*Heaven Has No Favorites* (1961; basis for the U.S. film *Bobby Deerfield*)  
*Night in Lisbon* (1964)  
*Shadows in Paradise* (posthumously, 1972)

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## General Objectives

1. To analyze the cause and nature of war
2. To assess character faults and idiosyncrasies
3. To recognize the themes of survival and loss
4. To examine standard battlefield situations
5. To account for the title
6. To isolate examples of friendship and loyalty
7. To define impressionism
8. To enumerate examples of coming of age
9. To describe the use of technology to maim and kill
10. To comment on waste of life

## Specific Objectives

1. To characterize Paul's circle of friends
2. To analyze the events that sober innocent soldiers
3. To describe how the military hierarchy creates men like Himmelstoss
4. To enumerate duties that frighten or dismay Paul
5. To identify Remarque's purpose in writing about his experiences
6. To grasp the dangers of trench warfare
7. To discuss how Paul sees home and family
8. To contrast Paul's mental states before, during, and after combat
9. To account for jokes, bragging, and teasing among comrades
10. To view film and video versions of the story for comparison to the original

## Literary Terms and Applications

For a better understanding of Erich Remarque's style, present the following terms and applications to *All Quiet on the Western Front*:

**Comic relief:** a witty exchange, skit, interlude, or soliloquy that the author deliberately inserts to ease tensions and lighten a dark or grim mood within a serious work. Frequent examples of hazing seem natural to a setting where young men fresh from school face regimentation, boring work, and the possibility of death or dehumanizing injury. After Himmelstoss arrives at the front, the "young heroes" humiliate him by trussing him in a bed cover and taking their fill of kicks and punches. The sight of their former tormentor crawling away offers a small but much-needed diversion from the dangers to all, whether officer or recruit.

**Impressionism:** an artistic and literary style of the late 19th century and early 20th century that is rooted in the personal sense impressions of a situation or object; for example, the floating menace of poison gas in Chapter Four and the cry of a moribund soldier isolated in no man's land. In opposition to strict realism, these and other examples of literary impressionism stress Paul's subjective interpretation of stimuli. Throughout, courage in fearful situations provides clues to the emotional makeup of each soldier and particularizes the terrors that comprise wartime experiences in the trenches.

**Irony:** an implied discrepancy between what is said or done and what is meant, as in the novel's title and in Paul's return from combat to find his mother near death from cancer. In the most telling sequence, Kat's death on the way to the aid station and the protagonist's death on a relatively calm day belie the dangerousness of the battlefield, where fighting men are ensnared under a variety of circumstances. The list of characters and causes of death dramatizes how little chance any has of surviving the war.

**Understatement:** a deliberate lessening of description, either as a result of great restraint or of irony. The opposite of hyperbole or overstatement, understatement is a stylistic method that enhances impressionism; for example, the simple sentences that introduce Chapter Six: "There are rumours of an offensive. We go up to the front two days earlier than usual. On the way we pass a shelled schoolhouse." By avoiding complicated commentary and emotionalism, Remarque intensifies the sense of impending doom.



## The Importance of Setting

The milieu of *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the prototypical war protest novel, centers on the clash of forces across a no man's land that extends in a jagged northwest-to-southeast diagonal from Flanders, Belgium, to Vosges, France. The action plunges the reader into World War I, with its stark, neorealistic nightmare of trench warfare, chlorine and mustard gas, bayonets, tanks, flame-throwers, hunger, disease, dying messenger-dogs and horses, stacked coffins, and food adulterated with sawdust. Composed from the German point of view in twelve chapters, the semi-autobiographical story carries the central intelligence, Paul Baumer, from high school graduation to the trenches and occupied territory at the front, where most of the novel takes place. Without pause, the action moves inexorably to Paul's death, the only section described in third person. The mélange of railroad cars, hospital wards, shelled cemetery, and prison camp contrast a swim, a night with French girls, a soldier's feast and sleep in a four-poster bed, and the seeming serenity of home, where Paul finds no contentment drinking beer among local noncombatants. On his way back to the front, he faces the terrors of dismembered body parts and more combat at the same time that he turns his back to the wasting disease that stalks his mother. Remarque's powerful, evocative scenarios force the reader to experience the horrors of war.

A study of *All Quiet on the Western Front* places Paul at various spots along the northwestern theater. In brief, impressionistic glimpses and citations, he names the Somme River, a training camp and prison on the moors, a humiliating game that mentions Lohne, a theater at Valenciennes, France, and a convalescent center in Klosterberg, with its "lane of poplars by the Klosterbach, where we used to catch sticklebacks." He leaves his home, in the shadow of Mount Dolbenberg, and later returns, where he crosses Bremerstrasse. He learns that his mother is to be treated for cancer in the third-class ward of the Luisa Hospital. To a pompous major, he pinpoints his billet "between Langemark and Bixschoote," northeast of Ypres, Belgium, one of the hotspots of the war.

Additional bits of information move about the map, from Paris to Russia, yet remain vague about Paul's location. On the train to the hospital, he passes through Herbesthal, presumably on his way

to a Catholic hospital in Cologne, Germany. Paul's comrades connect to real places: Johann Lewandowski and his wife Marja from Poland, Haie to a hospital at Thourhout, Detering to a farm at Oldenburg, and various men from Friesland, Saxony, Prussia, England, France, and America. Their cynical class quiz moves their thoughts from war to the Poetic League of Gottingen, the battle of Zana, the Athenian leader Lycurgus, and the population of Melbourne. In extreme images of primitivism that reflects the prejudices of the time and place, Paul compares fighters to Bushmen and Red Indians (the archaic term for Native Americans). As he draws near his death in 1918, the sense of place in "the classical conception of the Fatherland" gives way to detached, doom-laden scenes: "Trenches, hospitals, the common grave—there are no other possibilities."

## Cross-Curricular Sources

For more information about World War I, its leaders and victims, and the era's aftermath, consult these sources:

### Fiction

Mariano Azuelo, *The Underdogs*  
 Willa Cather, *One of Ours*  
 James Lincoln Collier and Christopher Collier, *My Brother Sam Is Dead*  
 Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage*  
 Howard Fast, *April Morning*  
 Esther Forbes, *Johnny Tremain*  
 Pat Frank, *Alas, Babylon*  
 Joe Haldeman, *The Forever War*  
 Robert Heinlein, *Starship Troopers*  
 Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*  
 Irene Hunt, *Across Five Aprils*  
 Harold Keith, *Rifles for Watie*  
 Harry Mazer, *The Last Mission*  
 Walter Dean Myers, *Fallen Angels*  
 Margaret Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind*  
 Margaret Rostkowski, *After the Dancing Days*  
 Michael Shaara, *The Killer Angels*  
 John Steakley, *Armor*  
 Dalton Trumbo, *Johnny Got His Gun*  
 Harry Turtledove, *The Great War: The American Front* and *The Great War: Walk in Hell*

### Nonfiction

Robert B. Asprey, *The German High Command at*

*War: Hindenburg and Ludendorff Conduct World War I*

Tom Donovan, *Hazy Red Hell: Fighting Experiences on the Western Front, 1914-1918*

William Dudley, ed., *World War I: Opposing Viewpoints*

John Ellis, *Eye-Deep in Hell—Trench Warfare in World War I*

Byron Farwell, *Over There: The United States in the Great War, 1917-1918*

Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*  
Jonathon Gawne, *Over There: The American Soldier in World War I*

Meirion and Susie Harries, *The Last Days of Innocence: America at War, 1917-1918*

Jocelyn Hart, *Britain and the Two World Wars*

Philip J. Haythornthwaite, *A Photohistory of World War One and The World War One Source Book*

John Keegan, *The First World War*

Lyn MacDonald, *To the Last Man: Spring, 1918*

Robert Massie, *Dreadnought*

Stewart Ross, *World War I*

William Simpson, *The Second Reich: Germany, 1917-1918*

Gill Thomas, *Life on All Fronts: Women in the First World War*

Time-Life Eds., *World in Arms: A.D. 1900-1925*

Barbara Tuchman, *The Guns of August*

Denis Winter, *Death's Men: Soldiers of the Great War*

Charles Woolley, *Uniforms and Equipment of the German Imperial Army, 1900-1918: A Study in Period Photographs*

### Poetry

Donald Davidson, "Ode to the Confederate Dead"

Thomas Hardy, "The Man He Killed"

Rudyard Kipling, "Gunga Din" and "Danny Deever"

### CD-ROMs

*The United States Army in World War I* (Center for Military History)

*World War I* (Flagtower)

### Internet

"Chronology of the First World War,"

<<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/FWW/chronology.htm>>.

"Life in the Trenches,"

<<http://firstworldwar.com/features/trench-life.htm>>

"A Multi-Media History of World War I," <<http://first-worldwar.com/index.htm>>

"Weapons of War: Poison Gas,"  
<[firstworldwar.com/weaponry/gas.htm](http://firstworldwar.com/weaponry/gas.htm)>.

"World War I and World War II Posters," <[www.the-forum.com/posters/warpost1.htm](http://www.the-forum.com/posters/warpost1.htm)>.

World War I Document Archives, Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University,  
<[http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Main_Page)>.

World War I Archives at Duke University,  
<<http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/mazzoni/worldwar1.html>>.

"World War I History Guide," <[www.search-beat.com/worldwar1.htm](http://www.search-beat.com/worldwar1.htm)>.

"World War I: Trenches on the Web,"  
<<http://www.worldwar1.com/>>.

### Videos/Films

*All Quiet on the Western Front*

*America Over There: The United States in World War I, 1917-1918*

*The Battle of the Somme*

*The Blue Max*

*A Farewell to Arms*

*Gallipoli*

*Paths of Glory*

*Sergeant York*

*War in the Trenches: The Western Front During World War I*

*WWI: The Death of Glory*

### Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in Erich Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* should include these aspects:

#### Themes

- innocence
- curiosity
- friendship
- hero worship
- uncertainty
- alienation
- loyalty
- family love
- fear of death
- doom

#### Motifs

- battlefield violence, horror, and chaos
- wartime mismanagement and shortages
- disintegration of a network of boyhood friends

- technical creativity put to use against humanity
- on-the-scene acquisition and refinement of survival techniques
- a failed attempt to return to boyhood settings and feelings
- detachment from life and ambitions
- the paradox of limited actions and freedom from childhood restraint

## Meaning Study

Below are words, phrases, sentences or thought units that have a particular meaning in the novel. Explain the meaning of each. Chapter and page numbers indicate the context from which the item is taken.

1. He roots among his supplies and offers me a fine piece of saveloy. With it goes hot tea and rum. (Chap. 2, p. 35)  
*(After a tense encounter, Müller welcomes Paul by offering him save/oy, a cheap, ready-to-eat pork sausage formed of dried or smoked meat scraps, fat, and strong spices, which conceal the poor quality of the mix. The term derives from the Old Italian for "pig's brain.")*
2. We had been allotted to one of the recently formed regiments, but were first to be sent back for equipment to the garrison, not to the reinforcement depot, of course, but to another barracks. (Chap. 3, p. 46)  
*(On their way to the front, Paul and his comrades received armaments and field supplies from the garrison, a local body of national guards or militiamen who staff a fortified command post or fort near a town or populated area at all times.)*
3. There is a rumour that the enemy are going to put tanks over and use low-flying planes for the attack. But that interests us less than what we hear of the new flamethrowers. (Chap. 6, p. 96)  
*(One of the decisive weapons of World War I was the flamethrower, a portable antipersonnel assault gun attached to a backpack of fuel. The nozzle hurls a stream of burning liquid into trenches, bunkers, and hatches of tanks. Introduced by the German army in 1915, the flamethrower evolved into a vehicle-mounted weapon during World War II.)*
4. Around the walls are the stone carvings of the Stations of the Cross. (Chap. 6, p. 108)  
*(While on guard duty in a cathedral cloister, Paul sees the re-creation of Christ's last day in 14 dramatic glimpses. The re-enactment moves Christ from condemnation to acceptance of the cross, the first fall on his route to execution, meeting with his mother, assistance from Simon of Cyrene, Veronica's cool cloth on his face, a second stumble, Christ's comments to female onlookers, a third fall, stripping of his garments, piercing of his hands and feet, death, removal of his corpse from the cross, and burial. Modern meditations on the crucifixion add resurrection as a 15th station.)*
5. The nights become quiet and the hunt for copper driving-bands and the silken parachutes of the French star-shells begins. (Chap. 6, p. 113)  
*(Remarque stresses the bravado of young soldiers searching for the soft metal ring or band around the shell of a cartridge and for the soft parachute material from starburst shells, which may have been made into battlefield mementos. Soldiers seem driven to find something useful or salvageable from combat.)*
6. They get killed simply because they hardly can tell shrapnel from high-explosive, they are mown down because they are listening anxiously to the roar of the big coal-boxes falling in the road, and miss the light, piping whistle of the low spreading daisy-cutters. (Chap. 6, p. 116)  
*(The humble names for deadly weapons belie their effect on terror-stricken men in trenches. They listen for coal boxes, the low-speed shells that give off a cloud of black smoke after being fired by the cannon called the Black Maria. Less audible is the daisy cutter, a concussive antipersonnel explosive device that is designed to maim, like a low-flying ball or scythe that lops off the heads of daisies in its path.)*
7. Coloured posters of the performances are still sticking on a hoarding. (Chap. 7, p. 126)  
*(The soldiers are drawn to the vision of a luscious young woman pictured on a poster attached to a security wall or billboard. To secure their dream girl, the men tear the adjacent figure of a relaxed young man in white trousers off the hoarding, taking care not to damage the girl.)*
8. "Un moment- . . . La guerre-grand malheur-pauvres garçons-" (Chap. 7, p. 132)  
*(Comforted by French-speaking women near the*

*canal, Paul and his comrades hear simple, soothing phrases: "One moment-. . . The war-great misfortune-poor boys-"*

9. It is pleasant to sit quietly somewhere, in the beer garden, for example, under the chestnuts by the skittle alley. (Chap. 7, p. 146) *(Among peaceable beer drinkers, Paul enjoys idle time alongside the skittle alley, a game of nine pins in which players bowl wooden discs down a grassy lawn toward pins set in a pattern or row. The game suggests the phalanxes of unsuspecting young men who are soon mowed down by the war.)*
10. You do your duty, you risk your lives, that deserves the highest honour—every man of you ought to have the Iron Cross—but first of all the enemy line must be broken through in Flanders and then rolled up from the top. (Chap. 7, p. 148) *(The master who chats with Paul declares that, as a reward for bravery in combat, young heroes deserve the Iron Cross, a Prussian-German military decoration established in 1813 by King Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia. The black Maltese cross is rimmed in silver with crossed swords and a cluster of oak leaves at the center of a red ribbon edged in black and white.)*

## Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the book.

### Questions 1-5 (Literal Level)

1. What settings and time period does the book cover?  
*(The book, which moves through snatches of time over a three-year period at the height of World War I, describes Paul Baumer's service on the Western Front from 1915 to his death in October 1918. Small clues place him along the northwestern end of the Western Front, which extends from Flanders, Belgium, south to Vosges, France. He recalls attending the cinema in Valenciennes, far west of his home in west central Germany near Mount Dolbenberg and*
- the cathedral of St. Margaret, which overshadows a skittle-alley at the beer garden. Evacuation aboard a train carries Paul from Herbesthal to Cologne. Snatches of places and times include memories of his education in a boy's preparatory school, where Kantorek browbeats students into joining the military for the sake of the Fatherland. After three weeks of brutal and sadistic training in Klosterberg under Himmelstoss, Paul and his friends join the millions involved in trench warfare. Personal contact with French-speaking people includes his swim in a canal and an all-night liaison with French girls, as well as the unforeseen hand-to-hand combat that kills Gerard Duval. He spends time on the moors guarding starving Russian prisoners. Also, Paul and his father and sister discuss the illness of his mother, who has returned to Luisa Hospital for repeated treatment of cancer.)*
2. How does Himmelstoss teach military discipline?  
*(One of the least likeable characters is Corporal Himmelstoss, a 12-year veteran in the postal service. The men surmise how Himmelstoss became the man they know: a strutting bantam and martinet called the "terror of Klosterberg." Himmelstoss degrades and wearies young recruits with meaningless, punishing drills, including crawling through mud. He forces Paul to remake his bed 14 times in a single morning and to knead a pair of stiff leather boots for 20 hours. Paul scrubs the Corporals' Mess with a toothbrush, clears snow from the barrack square with a hand broom and dust pan, and plays "Change at Löhne," a senseless game that requires men to stand at attention by a bed, then scramble underneath to the opposite side. Of his "bully" techniques, Kropp concludes, "it's not only Himmelstoss, there are lots of them. As sure as they get a stripe or a star they become different men, just as though they'd swallowed concrete.")*
3. What types of men become Paul's companions and role models?  
*(The war brings together a variety of men, from Friesian peasants to stout Saxons and naive schoolboys like Joseph Behm. Two extremes of soldiering come from Albert Kropp and Tjaden. Kropp, the clear-headed logician, is the first to advance to lance corporal and the most philo-*

sophical about the causes and nature of war. His leg wound causes him to vow to commit suicide rather than live without a leg. Far to the other extreme is Tjaden, a slender 19-year-old locksmith who risks a court martial by refusing to obey Himmelstoss, who had previously bunked Tjaden with a fellow bed wetter. Most significant to Paul is "Kat" Katczinsky, a 40-year-old scrounger and natural leader. A shrewd, cunning, and hard-bitten soldier, Kat prepares the men for impending bad weather and lightens good times by acquiring good food and soft jobs. When he is finally felled by a shin wound, Paul cheerfully shoulders him and starts off to the dressing station, stopping for a rest, a canteen of tea, and cigarettes. In their final moments, they recall the roast goose and almost three years of comradeship. On the slow walk to the aid station, Kat's untimely death from a splinter in the head so unnerves Paul that he collapses.)

4. How does Paul behave in combat?

(When the men are trucked to the front to lay wire, a bombardment throws their mission into chaos. Paul is smart enough to forego a run to the woods and chooses to take cover in the graveyard among men who scatter out behind mounds. In the hellish alternation between pitch dark and flaming explosions, Paul sees that he chose wisely, for the woods are pounded to pieces.

Paul is cool under fire and maintains his composure after a splinter tears his sleeve. When a crack on the skull threatens his consciousness, he reminds himself, "Don't faint!" and leaps to a shell hole in the belief that no place will be twice hit. Pragmatic and keen to remain alive, he shields himself with pieces of coffins and corpses. When Kat warns of gas, Paul masks himself and helps a recruit to do the same.)

5. How do the men change from experience?

(The men respond to war in a variety of emotions and logical responses. Some panic and die from breathing lung-searing gas; others go mad from claustrophobia and leap across no man's land toward certain death from machine gun fire or shelling. Men who admire nature respond to the first flush of cherry blossoms, but chafe at the cry of wounded horses and dying

messenger dogs. Some suffer with equanimity the wrenching gut pain of dysentery from disease and food laced with sawdust. They play skat, share their mail, and tell jokes to relieve tedium and heavy moods. In hospital wards, they tease nurses, refuse to pray, and team up to aid a love-starved husband in sharing a few moments alone with his wife. Crusty and refusing to give in to severe wounds, a ward mate returns from the dead room, where the dying are deposited to gasp out their last moments.)

Questions 6-8 (Interpretive Level)

6. How do soldiers objectify war?

(Men must treat war as a lesson in survival. The least experienced learn to joke about killing body lice and about eating bread soaked in rat's blood. To relieve tedium, Kropp and Kat lay bets on an air battle above them. Even though the German pilot is finally shot down, Kropp maintains his detached view of the fight as a distant scrap between warriors of whom he has chosen a loser. By thinking of other men as abstractions, the soldiers shield themselves from terror.

When horror moves too close to deny or rationalize, Paul feels the need to confess his crime after sharing a shell hole with Gerard Duval, the enemy soldier who dies slowly from Paul's attack. Looking through the man's pocketbook, Paul fails to maintain objectivity and crumbles into self-reproach, insisting dementedly that he must become a printer to atone for Duval's loss to his wife and daughter. On return, he refers to himself by his first name and quiets his nerves "as though someone else spoke to me."

Comforted by Kat and Albert, the next morning, Paul is able to conclude, "After all, war is war.")

7. Why is Paul's first leave unsuccessful?

(On leave, Paul feels disoriented, out of place, and overcome by the contrast between his idyllic childhood home and the horrors he has experienced. He takes in the familiar sights as the train chugs past Mount Dolbenberg and he recognizes Bremerstrasse and the station. He passes over the bridge and past the confectionery, grocery store, drug store, and bakery before reaching home. Overcome by emotion, he stops at the stairs to weep as his sister summons their mother. The fierce fight for control parallels the terror of his first bombardment: "I

*support myself with the butt of my rifle against my feet and clench my teeth fiercely, but I cannot speak a word, my sister's call has made me powerless, I can do nothing, I struggle to make myself laugh, to speak, but no word comes, and so I stand on the steps, miserable, helpless, paralysed, and against my will the tears run down my cheeks."*

*Although Paul reminds himself like an adult to a terrorized child, "You are at home, you are at home," he is unable to stanch the disorientation of wearing civilian clothes, reading, enjoying a beer, and talking with civilians. "There are no bugles and no bombardments, the children of the house play in the skittle-alley, and the dog rests his head against my knee." In the shadow of St. Margaret's Church, Paul attempts to talk about the war, but conceals from his father and mother the raw truth of his experiences. With dismay at his isolation among noncombatants, he realizes, "I do not belong here anymore, it is a foreign world.")*

8. What does Remarque mean when he declares that the bayonet has lost its importance? (Bayonets—rifles fitted with knife or sword blades to facilitate close-quarters combat in direct assaults by infantry. However, World War I saw the widespread use of mechanized artillery attacks and trench warfare, where much of the fighting was done from a distance, obviating the need for bayonets. Infantrymen would typically be issued machine guns. In World War I, the use of gas, artillery, and automatic weapons made bayonets a weapon of last resort.

*As a result of such technological changes, war, always an unedifying experience, becomes even more horrible a fraught with danger for Paul and his comrades. Romanticized notions of war collapse as technology makes mass death and destruction the norm during World War I. Unlike mounted knights and cavaliers in chain mail gripping mace or lance to do personal battle against an enemy—or their eighteenth- and nineteenth-century counterparts fighting one-on-one with bayonets—the armies of the Western Front used poison gas, flame throwers, artillery, airplane assaults, and machine guns, thus expanding death-dealing capabilities beyond one fighter against a well-matched*

*adversary. The daisy cutter, coal box, and waggie top, aside from their obvious ability to kill and maim, added a new demoralizing dimension to warfare, removing the warrior from honorable combat with a single foe by allowing an anonymous hand to set in motion a chain of mass destruction.)*

**Questions 9 and 10 (Critical Level)**

9. What does Paul symbolize?

*(Although much of Paul's behavior and outlook derives from autobiography, Remarque does more than reminisce about the war through historical fiction. As the central intelligence through whom the reader sees trench warfare, Paul displays the naiveté and frivolity one would expect of a twenty-year-old. At the novel's beginning, Remarque subverts the youthful outlook with the experience he has already undergone in a year as a soldier. Already on his way to complete despair, Paul works hard at enjoying free moments with his pals and partaking of food, cigarettes, fun, and romance, but finds his milieu severely tattered by injuries and deaths among his peers. The war zone offers little to uplift his spirits or to mask the obvious, which Remarque embodies in a stack of coffins awaiting the remains of the dead.)*

10. What can students learn from Paul's vision of battlefield carnage?

*(The stark, gory honesty of Remarque's feelings clash with the idealism of youth. The author uses vivid scenes of strafing, poison gas, and moribund victims calling like wraiths from no man's land to justify his opposition to war. At the height of hope in the summer of 1918, Paul contrasts "the scorched fields, raging fever of impatience, of disappointment, of the most agonizing terror of death" and rails in rhetorical question, "Why? Why do they make an end? And why do these rumours of an end fly about?" Looking back over his disillusion with military service, Paul laments "rainy weeks—grey sky, grey fluid earth, grey dying."*

*Remarque saves for the last paragraphs his warning. As Paul slips into a robotic obedience to useless commands, he regrets that his comrades "will not be able to find our way anymore." A lost generation, they stand as warning*

*signs of future cataclysms, but Paul insists “We will be superfluous even to ourselves, we will grow older, a few will adapt themselves, some others will merely submit, and most will be bewildered; the years will pass by and in the end we shall fall into ruin.” Because of the appeal of Remarque’s playful, energetic youth, students internalize the conflicted psyches that regretfully face futility and death in a pointless sacrifice for the Fatherland, in the process denying themselves potential happiness and fulfillment. The words that typify Paul are simple, eloquent: “I am so alone, and so without hope.”)*

**Questions 11-13 (Critical Level)**

11. Summarize the fighting spirit in an essay that explains the cause and nature of war. Discuss the implications of the term “Fatherland.”
12. Generate a detailed list of minor characters who suffer from war. Include Paul’s father and sisters, nurses, Mittelstaedt, Leer, Johann Lewandowski, little Peter, Franz Wachter, Joseph Behm, and Detering.
13. Join with a small group to discuss criticisms that Remarque romanticized the war. Comment on his variance of moods from playful, jubilant, and expectant to bored, vengeful, and despairing.

**Across the Curriculum**

**Art and Music**

1. Design a war memorial that creates a positive outlook while recalling the slaughter of innocent people. Inscribe a dedication that will remind people of the value of peace.
2. Play a recording of the original German national anthem, “Das Deutschlandlied” (“The Song of Germany”), with its famous first line, “Deutschland, Deutschland über alles” (“Germany, Germany above all”). Note that this line, as conceived by lyricist August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben in 1841, expressed a desire for German unification in a republican system, not worldwide German dominance in the Nazi model. Note also that the official German national anthem as of reunification in 1990 has been only the third stanza of the song:

*Unity and justice and freedom*

*For the German fatherland!  
For these let us all strive  
Brotherly with heart and hand!  
Unity and justice and freedom  
Are the pledge of fortune;  
Flourish in this fortune’s blessing,  
Flourish, German fatherland.*

Compare this anthem with those of Russia, the United States, and France. With a group, analyze the message in the lyrics of these songs, and discuss the effects of propaganda and nationalism on people’s behavior and lives, both generally and in the context of All Quiet on the Western Front. What positives can you see? What negatives? In particular, discuss how a good message—in support of unity, equality, justice, and brotherhood—can be co-opted by people with the opposite goals, not just in Germany but in other countries as well. Why do people respond to stirring emotional appeals, such as nationalistic music, in times of war? As an alternative assignment, write an essay discussing these issues.

**Cinema**

1. Draw a storyboard of painful or violent scenes. Depict how the camera would view Paul’s last visit with his mother, starving Russian prisoners, Kemmerich’s death, and Duval’s final moments.
2. View several classic war films such as *The Bridge over the River Kwai*, *Spartacus*, *Apocalypse Now*, and *Glory*. Compare war in different time periods. Note the similarities of human responses in each era.

**Drama**

1. Prepare a dialogue dramatizing Paul’s discussions with his comrades about their eventual return to civilian life and their hopes for jobs, homes, and families. Add comments from Paul about his mother’s illness.
2. Draw stage settings for a dramatization of the swim across the canal, Paul’s second return home, visits to the prison camp, Tjaden’s incarceration in the chicken coop, Ginger’s preparations of food for a whole company, Kat’s death, Kemmerich’s amputation, Paul’s train ride from Herbesthal, and Detering’s desertion.

3. Read aloud David's response to the deaths of King Saul and David's best friend Jonathan in 2 Samuel, Chapter 1. Contrast David's plaintive outcry with Paul's fainting at the aid station after discovering Kat's death.

### Geography

1. Mark a map of Europe with the following places mentioned in the novel: Berlin, Lohne, Belgium, Flanders, Vosges, Thourhout, Oldenburg, Zana, Melbourne, Somme, Dolbenberg, Bremerstrasse, Langemark, Bixschoote, Paris, Cologne, and Herbesthal. Mark the geographical location of Saxons, Bushmen, Friesiens, and Prussians.
2. Identify on a map both the eastern and western fronts and no man's land between them. Create a legend to clarify map symbols.

### History and Social Studies

1. Prepare a time line of parallel world events. Explain how England, Russia, Turkey, Italy, France, Bulgaria, Hungary, Belgium, and the United States became involved.
2. Act out a role in the war. Choose from truck driver, nurse, sniper, tank or zeppelin commander, U-boat captain, drill instructor, uniform maker, cook, general, reconnaissance patrol, pilot, or gunsmith. Emphasize your greatest fears and satisfactions as you go about your work.
3. Account for President Wilson's belief that World War I was the "war to end all wars." Read biographical commentary about Marshal Hindenburg and the Kaiser. Decide how history should judge their conduct of the war.
4. Describe aloud Paul's struggle to reconcile the lessons of the classroom with the realities of war. Explain why he and the others ridicule education as useless.
5. Discuss your attitude toward euthanasia for seriously injured or dying people or animals.
6. Discuss the long-range effects of war. Project how amputees and other survivors cope with the emotional and physical strain of returning to civilian life. Suggest ways the government, communities, doctors, ministers, and families can help.
7. Contrast the English and American involvement against Germany and its allies during World War I. Include by nationality the total people killed, missing, and injured. Cite data con-

cerning property destroyed and territories lost.

8. Present an overview of American military actions from the War of Independence through the present. Discuss how these events differed in terms of war technology, extent of battles, cost of supplies, and public response before, during, and after each. Note the role of the media in modern war politics.

### Language Arts

1. Analyze Paul's description of the summer of 1918. Why does life seem more precious than it did in 1916? How does the theme of evanescence add to the poignancy of his death? Compare Remarque's lyrical passage to those of poets Rainer Maria Rilke, Rupert Brooke, Wilfred Owen, W. H. Auden, A. E. Housman, and Dylan Thomas.
2. Compare Remarque's terse, muscular prose to that of Ernest Hemingway, particularly in *A Farewell to Arms*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, "In Another Country," and journalistic essays for the *Toronto Star*.
3. Compare the philosophies of these and other war-related titles: *Johnny Got His Gun*, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, *Across Five Aprils*, *Hair*, *John Brown's Body*, *Fallen Angels*, *The Red Badge of Courage*, "In Flanders Fields," "Onward Christian Soldiers," "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," "The Man He Killed," "The Destruction of Sennacherib," and "Ode to the Confederate Dead."
4. Using foreign language dictionaries, prepare an exhaustive glossary of foreign terms. Identify the language from which each comes.
5. Using the *All Quiet on the Western Front* as a model, define impressionism.

### Science and Health

1. List and illustrate examples of transportation and weaponry used in World War I. Include flame-throwers, grenades, shovels, daggers, gas masks, machine guns, planes, tanks, u-boats, zeppelins, and different sizes and types of bombs. Explain how a bayonet attaches to a rifle and how it is aimed at the soft gut tissue of an adversary. Append a short note about the role of Augustus Morgan, inventor of the gas mask.
2. Compose a website of survival techniques that keep Paul, Kat, and the others alive for three



years of frontline duty. Describe how Bertinck, Detering, and others transgress good sense and are wounded or killed.

3. Discuss Paul's mental and physical condition when he discovers Kat's death. Why does Paul faint at this point after seeing so many people die mutilated and shrieking in pain?
4. Explain in a short speech the combined effect of terror, shock, alienation, loneliness, separation, loss, torture, hunger, illness, pain, uncertainty, and fatigue on warriors. Discuss the survival instinct, that causes soldiers to forage for food, eat soiled bread, hide under coffins, pick lice, fight off corpse rats, and dig deeper into trenches to stay alive.

### Student Involvement Activities

1. Write a news release for radio or wireless transmission announcing the Fatherland's need for volunteers. Present a patriotic image of the war, its purpose, and the glory awaiting new recruits.
2. Lead a debate about whether Paul should join the army with his friends. Discuss his alternatives. Account for his family's opinion.
3. Use scenes from *All Quiet on the Western Front* to decorate a mural depicting World War I. Depict soldiers, messenger dogs, and horses victimized by barbed wire, flame-throwers, grenades, machine guns, poisoned gas, and planes.
4. Cite lines that honor the unknown soldier in France, Russia, and the United States. Compose a series of epitaphs for people killed in the war, particularly Kat, Paul, Kemmerich, Müller, and Gerard Duval. Add an appropriate line for Paul's mother.
5. Pantomime the off-duty activities of Paul and his friends. Include games of skat, flirting with French girls, reading letters, bathing, smoking, reminiscing, fighting, arguing, and planning for the future.
6. Establish a web site introducing Remarque's works. Group them by genre—historical fiction, screenplay, and autobiography. Star his most popular titles, both in print and on film.
7. Explain in a theme the irony of the title. Propose other names for the book.
8. Compose a first person account of the evacuation process for wounded soldiers. Describe how the men are treated at the Catholic hos-

pital and how they advise newcomers on what is expected of them and what to avoid.

9. Draw a character web representing the interconnectedness of Paul's group. Indicate how newcomers fit in. Use the web to outline a theme in which you explain the role of a minor character, such as Ginger the Cook, Lt. Bertinck, Paul's sister and father, the Kaiser, Mittelstaedt, Marja and Johann Lewandowski, Berger, the Russian violinist, and Sister Libertine.
10. Explain briefly why Erich Maria Remarque continued writing about soldiers, survivors, and displaced persons throughout his forty-year career.

### Alternate Assessment

1. Compose a list of every death described in the novel. Give justification or explanation for each, including Paul Baumer, Franz Wachter, Kat, Kemmerich, Joseph Behm, Müller, Gerard Duval, Detering, Leer, messenger dogs, and horses.
2. Make two lists of scenes from the novel that express contrasting attitudes toward loyalty, survival, compassion, vengeance, torment, passion, longing, loneliness, fear, and mercy. Next to each, indicate what you think is the author's personal philosophy.
3. Compose an extended character sketch of Paul and Kat. Compare their experience and survival skills with those of other literary warriors, such as the protagonists of the *The Iliad*, *The Underdogs*, *The Red Badge of Courage*, or *The Killer Angels*.
4. Compose a chapter in which Paul returns home and meets Kat's family. Express his grief at losing a friend and role model. Comment on the courage of other courageous men, particularly Lieutenant Bertinck.

## Vocabulary Test

From the list that follows, select the correct word to replace the boldfaced word in each sentence. Write your answer in the blank provided. You will have answers left over when you finish.

abstraction	debauched	implacable	offensive	shrapnel
allotted	de-loused	insubordination	ostracized	stupefied
apathetic	differentiated	kaiser	quixotic	superfluous
bombardments	disquietude	melancholy	remonstrance	territorial
coveted	docile	obtuse	requisitioned	tormenting

1. We will be **unnecessary** \_\_\_\_\_ even to ourselves, we will grow older, a few will adapt themselves, some others will merely submit, and most will be bewildered; the years will pass by and in the end we shall fall into ruin.
2. Joseph Behm did allow himself to be persuaded, otherwise he would have been **shunned** \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The English boots are things to be **envied** \_\_\_\_\_.
4. There are rumours of an **invasion** \_\_\_\_\_.
5. There are no bugles and no **assaults** \_\_\_\_\_, the children of the house play in the skittle-alley, and the dog rests his head against my knee.
6. Tjaden pretends to be **unintelligent** \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The young recruits are **tame** \_\_\_\_\_.
8. We had been **assigned** \_\_\_\_\_ to one of the recently formed regiments.
9. Our heads are **corrupted** \_\_\_\_\_ with stupor.
10. We can be damned **impractical** \_\_\_\_\_ when we like.
11. It was that **concept** \_\_\_\_\_ that I stabbed.
12. My **uneasiness** \_\_\_\_\_ grows.
13. We only know that in some **sad** \_\_\_\_\_ way we have become a waste land.
14. Were we more subtly **individualized** \_\_\_\_\_ we must long since have gone mad, have deserted, or have fallen.
15. Next morning, after I have been **cleaned** \_\_\_\_\_, I go to the rail head.
16. The sun strikes low; I am **senseless** \_\_\_\_\_ with exhaustion and hunger.
17. It was fairly quiet on our sector, so the quartermaster who remained in the rear **acquired** \_\_\_\_\_ the usual quantity of rations and provided for the full company of one hundred and fifty men.
18. Now I see that he is **hurting** \_\_\_\_\_ me.
19. But now they are quite **indifferent** \_\_\_\_\_ and listless.
20. I have to appear as a witness and explain the reason of Tjaden's **disobedience** \_\_\_\_\_.

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## Comprehension Test A

### Part I: Matching (20 points)

Match each description with the name of the correct character. You may use some answers more than once.

- |   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| _____ 1. mocks Kantorek                                     | a. Mrs. Baumer         |
| _____ 2. earns the name "Mother"                            | b. Gerard Duval        |
| _____ 3. carries a picture of his wife and child            | c. Albert Kropp        |
| _____ 4. is a veteran postman                               | d. Katczinsky          |
| _____ 5. makes underpants of wool                           | e. Kantorek            |
| _____ 6. is a born schoolmaster                             | f. Joseph Behm         |
| _____ 7. refuses an order and cheerfully accepts punishment | g. Lieutenant Bertinck |
| _____ 8. crawls about no man's land                         | h. Mrs. Lewandowski    |
| _____ 9. earns the men's respect for fairness               | i. Franz Kemmerich     |
| _____ 10. cannot bear to hear horses suffer                 | j. Tjaden              |
| _____ 11. takes bed number 26 at St. Joseph's               | k. Detering            |
| _____ 12. names students "Iron Youth"                       | l. Müller              |
| _____ 13. is a peat digger                                  | m. Haie Westhus        |
| _____ 14. is promoted to lance corporal                     | n. Himmelstoss         |
| _____ 15. warns Paul about French women                     | o. Mittelstaedt        |

### Part II: True/False (30 points)

In the space provided write **T** if the statement is completely true or **F** if any part of the statement is false.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Paul pities the Russians because they are starving.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. On his second visit home, Paul does not anticipate surviving the war or seeing his mother return from the third-class ward at the Luisa Hospital.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Paul's sister insists that he take whortleberry jam and potato cakes to his friends in the trenches.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The men break a bottle to call the nurse's attention away from the Lewandowskis.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Himmelstoss is humiliated by sharing a bunk with a man who wets the bed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Paul earns a two-week rest after being gassed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Kat's death occurs at the aid station where he is treated for a superficial wound.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Paul risks punishment in a chicken coop by playing skat.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. A single fragment wounds both Bertinck and Leer.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Kat is a cobbler and skilled forager of food.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Explosions in a cemetery terrorize the men, who take cover in open graves and cower from flamethrowers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Paul agrees that learning about William Tell and Goethe has been a waste of everyone's time.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. The French women are kind and sympathetic to soldiers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. In 1918, Paul feels alone and marked for death.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Paul has difficulty fitting into civilian clothes because he has outgrown them.

### Part III: Motivation (20 points)

Complete each line below with a reason or justification.

1. Paul faints because

2. At home, Paul weeps because

3. Visiting a beer garden is unpleasant because

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4. Himmelstoss gives the men butter and sugar because
5. Paul lies to Mrs. Kemmerich because
6. The girl in the poster is pleasing because
7. The Western Front extends from Flanders to Vosges because
8. Aboard a train, Paul is embarrassed because
9. Men search for parachute silk and copper driving bands because
10. Paul and Kat consider killing a wounded soldier because

### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Describe Paul's care of a man who soils his pants.
2. Explain why the visit from the Kaiser is unimpressive.
3. Summarize information about World War I technology.
4. Account for sickness from adulterated food.

## Comprehension Test B

### Part I: Matching (20 points)

Match actions with settings from the novel. You will have answers left over when you finish.

- |                     |                  |                   |                |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| a. Valenciennes     | d. no-man's land | g. moors          | j. Friesia     |
| b. train to Cologne | e. Flanders      | h. Luisa Hospital | k. prison camp |
| c. dying room       | f. Dolbenberg    | i. St. Joseph's   | l. Poland      |

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Paul sees men whose beards remind him of apostles.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Paul attends a cinema.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Familiar landmarks welcome Paul as he nears home.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 4. Paul's mother returns to the hospital for cancer treatment.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 5. Gerard gurgles before dying.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 6. Kemmerich's watch is stolen.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 7. Haie lives in a crude hut and dreams of becoming a village bobby.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 8. Marja leaves to visit her husband.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 9. The German-master wants the men to smash through the front and earn Iron Crosses.  
\_\_\_\_\_ 10. The Western Front extends southeast to Vosges.

### Part II: Fill in the Blank (20 points)

Complete the following sentences by filling each blank with a word or phrase.

1. Billeted east of the Western Front between \_\_\_\_\_ and Bixschoote, Paul Baumer admires \_\_\_\_\_, his 40-year-old idol.  
2. Paul and his comrades are trapped by artillery fire while laying \_\_\_\_\_ and retreat to a \_\_\_\_\_.  
3. From information he finds in \_\_\_\_\_'s pocketbook, he learns that his victim has a wife and child and works as a \_\_\_\_\_.  
4. The first of Paul's friends to die is \_\_\_\_\_, who leaves behind soft \_\_\_\_\_.  
5. A small \_\_\_\_\_ wound kills Kat as Paul ferries him to an \_\_\_\_\_.

### Part III: Short Answer (20 points)

Answer each of the following and discuss their impact on the mood of the story.

1. What insects play innocently above the battlefield?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What planes direct artillery fire?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Whom does Mittelstaedt blame for Joseph Behm's death?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Who serves as a model for Kantorek?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What vow does Paul take to prove he tells the truth about Kemmerich's death?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Whom does Paul guard on the moors?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. At what river do the Germans sustain heavy fighting?  
\_\_\_\_\_

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8. What assures the Baumers good food while Paul visits?
9. How do Kat and Kropp spot an enemy patrol?
10. With what small weapon does Paul arm himself in the shell hole?

### Part IV: Identification (10 points)

Explain why each of the following is important to the story:

1. goose
2. clink
3. Western Front
4. four-poster bed
5. skat

### Part V: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Analyze the subjects and tones of soldier conversations.
2. Compare Paul at the beginning and end of his military service.
3. Enumerate methods by which Kat acquires luxuries.
4. Contrast journeys in the story in terms of destinations, purpose, dangers, and length of stay.

## Answer Key

### VOCABULARY TEST

- |                 |                     |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. superfluous  | 11. abstraction     |
| 2. ostracized   | 12. disquietude     |
| 3. coveted      | 13. melancholy      |
| 4. offensive    | 14. differentiated  |
| 5. bombardments | 15. de-loused       |
| 6. obtuse       | 16. stupefied       |
| 7. docile       | 17. requisitioned   |
| 8. allotted     | 18. tormenting      |
| 9. debauched    | 19. apathetic       |
| 10. quixotic    | 20. insubordination |

### COMPREHENSION TEST A

#### Part I: Matching (20 points)

- |      |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. o | 6. l  | 11. i |
| 2. h | 7. j  | 12. e |
| 3. b | 8. f  | 13. m |
| 4. n | 9. g  | 14. c |
| 5. a | 10. k | 15. a |

#### Part II: True/False (30 points)

- |      |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. T  | 11. F |
| 2. F | 7. F  | 12. F |
| 3. F | 8. F  | 13. T |
| 4. F | 9. T  | 14. T |
| 5. F | 10. T | 15. T |

#### Part III: Motivation (20 points)

Answers will vary.

#### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

### COMPREHENSION TEST B

#### Part I: Matching (20 points)

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. k | 6. i  |
| 2. a | 7. g  |
| 3. f | 8. l  |
| 4. h | 9. e  |
| 5. d | 10. e |

#### Part II: Fill in the Blank (20 points)

- Langemark, Kat
- wire, cemetery
- Gerard Duval, compositor (printer)
- Kemmerich, boots
- skull, aid station

#### Part III: Short Answer (20 points)

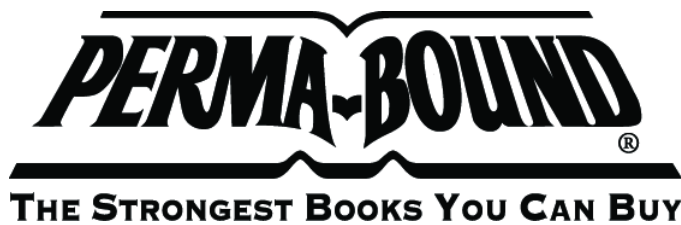
- |                             |                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. butterflies              | 6. Russians                 |
| 2. observation              | 7. Somme                    |
| 3. Kantorek                 | 8. his allotment of rations |
| 4. Boettcher                | 9. by cigarette smoke       |
| 5. May I never<br>come back | 10. dagger                  |

#### Part IV: Identification (10 points)

- One of the meals that Kat supplies by foraging
- A threatened punishment for disobedience
- The offensive line made by German divisions pressing against the Allies
- A treasure that marks the ease of guarding a village for eight days.
- A card game that passes the time in the trenches.

#### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.



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