

# ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT

by Erich Maria Remarque



## THE AUTHOR

Erich Maria Remarque (1898-1970) was born into an impoverished Catholic family in Osnabruck, Germany. His parents were of French ancestry, but had changed their names to make them sound more German. Their son was thus born Erich Paul Remark; he later returned to the French spelling and changed his middle name in memory of his mother. Young Remarque was a good student in school, but often had trouble with the authoritarian attitudes of his teachers (he got his revenge by ridiculing them in his novels, e.g., the character of Kantorek in *All Quiet on the Western Front*). He studied education at the University of Münster, but was drafted into the German army at the age of 18. During the war, he was wounded five times while fighting on the Western Front, though he did not experience the worst of the suffering there.

After the war, he drifted from job to job, eventually becoming a writer for a sports magazine. With the publication of *All Quiet on the Western Front*, based on his war experience, in 1929, he became an instant sensation. The book was translated into English (and eventually into 25 languages), made into an award-winning movie in the United States, but condemned and eventually banned in Germany. He wrote ten other novels, including *The Road Back* (1931), *Arch of Triumph* (1946), and *The Black Obelisk* (1957). Many were turned into theatrical releases, in one of which he actually acted, but none achieved the acclaim of his first and most famous work.

Despite his friendship with Nazi filmmaker and propagandist Leni Riefenstahl, his works were burned by the Nazis and films based on them were attacked and banned. He lived in Switzerland from 1931 to 1939 to escape Nazi persecution (his younger sister was executed for anti-Nazi activism in 1943), then moved to the United States, where he eventually became a naturalized citizen after he was stripped of his German citizenship by the Nazis. In America, he moved in the highest social circles, lived in Hollywood for a time, had many affairs, including one with Marlene Dietrich, and eventually married actress Paulette Goddard (his first marriage had also been to an actress). He died in Italy in 1970.

*All Quiet on the Western Front* was his first and greatest novel. The story of the experiences of an ordinary soldier in World War I, its antiwar message struck a chord in all nations; many have noted that the names of people and places could easily be changed so that the story portrayed a soldier from France, Britain, or the United States, and the effect would have been the same. The book is among the best examples of the disillusionment that swept Europe following World War I, though Remarque expressed his ideas through the experience of war itself rather than its aftermath, as was the case with writers like Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald, both of whom were personal friends of Remarque.

## **PLOT SUMMARY**

After two weeks on the front line, the Second Company is pulled back for some rest. Because they lost half their men to the British artillery, each man receives double rations of food and tobacco. They look forward to the day mail is delivered, and lounge lazily on their homemade latrines, playing cards, sharing gossip and enjoying the beauty of the scenery. Bäumer, the narrator, reminisces about his schoolmaster Kantorek, a strict taskmaster who had hectored him and his schoolmates into volunteering for the army. Men with education had turned out to be the foolish idealists, totally unaware of what they were getting themselves into and yielding to the pressure of others for fear of being thought cowards, while simple peasants were more aware of the folly of war. Soon they go to the medical station to visit their friend Franz Kemmerich and bring him his things so he can return to the group. They find that he has lost his leg and someone has stolen his watch, and realize that he will never return. One of their number, a logical thinker named Müller, tries to take the dying man's boots so the orderlies will not get them when he dies.

Bäumer often thinks of the poems and the beginning of a play in his drawer at home – his old life seems so distant and unreal that he can no longer imagine the way things used to be. He also remembers the dehumanizing effect of boot camp, and how the nonsensical nature of its strictures and requirements had driven all vestiges of idealism from their minds. Corporal Himmelstoss, the head of their platoon, abuses the men cruelly, with the result that they are toughened for the battles they are to face and develop camaraderie that will stand them in good stead. Later Bäumer again visits Kemmerich, who by now knows he is dying. He tells Bäumer to take his boots to Müller, and then passes from this world. Later reinforcements arrive in preparation for returning to the front, and the group of friends sits around discussing why the army makes such brutes out of peasants when they become officers. Then they hear that Himmelstoss is joining the company, and they conspire to ambush him at night on his way back from town and beat him within an inch of his life.

Bäumer and his platoon again move toward the front lines to string barbed wire. Kaczkinsky senses that a bombardment is coming soon. When they arrive at the front, a bombardment from the French indeed begins, and the shells fall among them. One cavalry regiment is hit and the wounded horses scream out in pain. As they return to the trucks that are to take them back to camp, another artillery attack begins, this time accompanied by poison gas. They are trapped in a graveyard and take refuge in shell craters, tossing out the coffins that already inhabit the holes. They finally return to camp, minus the casualties of the bombardment.

As the men sit around camp entertaining themselves by killing lice and talking about what they'll do when the war is over, they consider how to deal with the unwelcome arrival of Himmelstoss. Soon he walks up to them, and they continue to lounge around and refuse to respond to his orders, finally insulting him to his face. He storms away in a rage, threatening to report the lot of them. The next object for reminiscence and ridicule is their schoolmaster Kantorek. The

leading culprits get a brief sentence in the brig for the incident with Himmelstoss. Later, Bäumer and Kaczkinsky steal a goose from a nearby farm, roast it, and share the spoils with their incarcerated mates.

When the platoon moves forward amid rumors of a new offensive, they see stockpiled coffins and know the rumors are true. Once they dig into their new positions, they realize that the Allies' artillery has been augmented, while their own worn-out guns are depositing shells in their own trenches instead of those of the enemy. They can do little to protect themselves from either side's artillery, and know that the difference between living and dying is nothing more than chance. As the days pass, they enjoy extra rations, protect themselves with masks from poison gas attacks, and amuse themselves by killing rats with their spades. When the bombardment is renewed, the shells fall so thickly that food cannot be brought to the men in the trenches. A new recruit, overcome by claustrophobia, tries to flee the trench and must be forcibly restrained by the others.

When the bombardment ends, the platoon leaves the trench and assaults the French soldiers on the other side with grenades and machine guns. The face of the enemy is now visible for the first time, and carnage is everywhere. As the day passes, the platoon attacks and retreats with the ebb and flow of the battle. At the end of the day, they scavenge whatever provisions they can find – those of the Allies seem to be more plentiful than their own – and return to their comrades. As night falls, the men dream of the forever-unattainable quiet scenes of their childhoods. Day after day the battle continues, and the dead pile up with no gain of territory on either side. The corpses cannot be buried, nor can many of the wounded be retrieved, so the air is filled with anguished cries and the stench of putrefaction. The new recruits suffer most, not possessing the survival skills of the veterans. At one point the despised Himmelstoss hides in a bunker to avoid the battle, but is finally forced to join the assault. As the shelling continues, the first of the original comrades to enlist together meets his end, as Haie Westhus gets his back torn open. When Second Company is finally relieved, only thirty-two of their original one hundred and fifty men remain.

The experience in the trenches softens Himmelstoss, and he seeks to make friends with his former adversaries. When he is appointed to take the place of the cook, he garners extra food for them, and they are soon won over. While they are recuperating away from the front, they see an old theatrical poster with a picture of a pretty girl and remember what they are missing. Later they swim in the canal and see three girls on the far bank. That night, they swim across and spend the night with the girls, taking some of their rations as presents.

The next day Bäumer is given two weeks' leave, after which he will go to camp for a training session. In all, he will be gone for six weeks. He says goodbye to the little French girl from the other side of the canal, knowing he will never see her again, and says farewell to his comrades, wondering whether he will see them, either. When he gets home, he sees his sister and his mother, who is sick with cancer, but he cannot feel at home – his experiences have created a distance he is unable to bridge. When they ask him about the war, he minimizes the horrors and gives vague answers. He soon becomes frustrated with the perpetual questions, the know-it-alls who think their strategy superior to that of the commanders, and the local officers who have to show off their strictness in comparison to what they perceive as the lax discipline of the front. Paul soon realizes that he has changed too much to feel like he fits in at home anymore; he even has no interest in his books. One day he wanders down to the local parade ground and discovers that Kantorek, his old schoolmaster, is now enlisted in a reserve unit. The commander of the unit, a former schoolmate of Bäumer, treats him roughly in much the same way he had done when they were his students. Before Paul leaves home to go to training, he visits the mother of his friend Kemmerich, the first in the

platoon to be killed, and lies to her about the manner of his death. All in all, he regrets ever having come home.

In the training camp, Paul finds nothing but boring routine. He knows few of the men, and thus pays little attention to others. Next to them is a camp for Russian prisoners. The Russians cross over when they can and scavenge in the garbage and seek to trade their few paltry possessions for food; most of them are starving. Bäumer mulls over the fact that, if he knew the names of these men, he might feel sympathy for them, and if some far-off official should sign a document, they might fight on the same side together. He then takes his cigarettes and distributes them among the prisoners. The day before he is to return to his platoon, Paul receives a visit from his father and sister. They tell him his mother's cancer has worsened, and that she is now in the hospital; they have no idea how they will be able to pay for her treatment.

After searching for a few days, Paul is finally able to find his regiment. They have just returned from hard fighting, and he shares with his friends the provisions he brought from home. Everyone is issued new uniforms and gear, and the rumor spreads that they are going to Russia to fight on the Eastern Front. Instead, the Kaiser comes to inspect the troops. After the Kaiser leaves, they wonder at how insignificant he looks, and how one such man could have caused or prevented the carnage of this great war. They muse on the fact that both sides are fighting to protect their fatherlands, that both believe only themselves to be in the right, and consider the causes behind it all, noting that someone must be profiting from it, though the soldiers themselves clearly are not. Further frustration is added when they have to return their new gear and take back their old rags once the inspection is over.

The rumor about the Eastern Front turns out to be false, and they continue deeper into France. As they move forward, they see bodies hanging from the trees, blown out of their clothes and with limbs torn asunder by trench mortars. Paul joins a reconnaissance party to discover the strength of the enemy force, and finds that his leave has brought doubts into his mind that cause him fear he had never experienced before, but he is comforted by the presence of his comrades. As he crawls around in the dark, he loses his sense of direction and is unsure which way to go. Soon a bombardment begins, followed by an attack, but the assault is repulsed and he is able to breathe freely again. As he is hiding in a shell hole, an enemy soldier falls into the pit, and he stabs him with his dagger. Snipers and machine-gun fire keep him pinned down, unable to leave the hole, and he suspects that his comrades have given him up for dead. Soon the enemy soldier begins to groan, and Bäumer realizes that he is still alive. He tries to soothe him, to give him water, to make him comfortable, and calls him "Comrade" to allay his fear. To see a man he himself has killed in hand-to-hand combat slowly die is torture to Paul, but by three that afternoon the man succumbs. During hour after hour of waiting, he imagines what the life of the dead man must have been like, about his job, his wife and family, and then thinks of his dead comrades and the small elements of chance that make the difference between life and death for a soldier. He apologizes to the dead man, insisting that, given the chance again, he would not have stabbed him. He takes the pocket-book out of the dead man's tunic and finds that he was Gerard Duval, a printer with a wife and young daughter. He vows to write to the family, send them money, devote his life to their welfare, even become a printer himself, but realizes that these vows are nothing more than an attempt to justify his existence, and that he will never fulfill them. He then swears to devote his life to making sure that such horrors never occur again. When night falls, he returns to his own lines and tells his friends about what happened to the printer.

The platoon is then sent to guard a supply dump in an abandoned village. They gather bedding from the abandoned houses and scrounge food wherever they can find it; they even find two

live pigs and plan a feast. The smoke from cooking attracts planes, which drop shells all around them, but they race back to their cellar hideout with the food in tow. Loose bowels cause them a difficult night, but they continue to enjoy the luxuries of village life for another eight days. They are then picked up to return to their regiment, but they take with them all they can carry, including food, furniture, and a stray cat.

When they go to evacuate a French village, the platoon is shelled by French artillery at the rear of their column. Both Paul and Albert Kropp are wounded. The surgeon removes the pieces of shell and patches them up, and they prepare to leave on the hospital train the next morning. They bribe the sergeant-major to put them in the same car, but then realize that they are going off without their plunder from the abandoned village. Albert's condition worsens as they travel, and they are finally put off at a Catholic hospital. Many in the hospital die, and Paul is operated on because his leg is not healing properly, while Kropp has his leg amputated. After they recover sufficiently, both Paul and Albert are sent home – Albert to stay and Paul to regain his strength enough to return to his regiment.

The pressures of the war take an increasing toll on the soldiers. One, seeing a cherry tree in bloom and being reminded of his cherry orchard at home, deserts and is court-martialed, while another dies trying to rescue a wounded messenger dog. Müller is killed, but before he dies he gives Bäumer the boots he had gotten from Kemmerich. The quality of the food grows almost unbearable; soldiers are suffering from dysentery while war profiteers are getting rich back home. The new replacement soldiers are good for nothing except to get themselves killed. New tanks and flamethrowers make life in the trenches ever more dangerous; Leer and the company commander both fall in the same shell hole. To the soldiers it is increasingly obvious that Germany is losing the war, and all long for an end, hoping merely to survive the great carnage of the summer of 1918. Late in the heat of summer, the veteran Kaczkinsky takes a bullet and Paul tries to carry him to the medical tent. By the time they arrive, Stanislaus Kaczkinsky is dead and Paul has lost his best friend. He is the only one left from his original class at school. In the autumn he again is given two weeks' leave. Word of a coming armistice continues to circulate, but he is called back to the front and dies one month before the end of the war, on a day when the only army report of the action was "All quiet on the Western Front."

## **MAJOR CHARACTERS**

- Paul Bäumer – The narrator, he is a twenty-year-old soldier in the Second Company of the German army on the Western front. He and his friends enlist, but he watches them die one by one, and is finally killed a month before the armistice.
- Stanislaus Kaczkinsky – The leader of Bäumer's group, he is a forty-year-old veteran and an expert at scavenging food and other supplies. He becomes Paul's best friend, but is killed months before the end of the war.
- Franz Kemmerich - A schoolmate of Paul's, he is the second of the group to die. After his leg is amputated, he gives his boots to Müller.
- Müller - Another classmate and an aspiring engineer, he is smart and practical; he passes the boots on to Paul before he dies.

- Albert Kropp - The only one of Paul's classmates to survive the war, he is discharged when his leg is amputated.
- Kantorek - The schoolmaster where Paul and his friends studied. He convinces them to enlist by glorifying war, then later shows up as a member of a reserve unit.
- Corporal Himmelstoss – The martinet who brutalized the new recruits during the boot camp phase of their training, he later joins them at the front and makes amends.
- Gerard Duval - A French soldier who stumbles into the trench occupied by Paul and is subsequently killed by him.

### NOTABLE QUOTATIONS

“This book is to be neither an accusation nor a confession, and least of all an adventure, for death is not an adventure to those who stand face to face with it. It will try simply to tell of a generation of men who, even though they may have escaped its shells, were destroyed by the war.” (Epigraph)

“It is very queer that the unhappiness of the world is so often brought on by small men.” (ch.1, p.15)

“We only know that in some strange and melancholy way we have become a waste land.” (ch.2, p.24)

“In himself man is essentially a beast, only he butters it over like a slice of bread with a little decorum.” (Katzinsky, ch.3, p.44)

“To no man does the earth mean so much as to the soldier.” (ch.4, p.54)

“It's unendurable. It is the moaning of the world, it is the martyred creation, wild with anguish, filled with terror, and groaning.” (ch.4, p.61)

“The war has ruined us for everything.” (Kropp, ch.5, p.81)

“Every soldier believes in Chance and trusts his luck.” (ch.6, p.93)

“We sit as if in our graves waiting only to be closed in.” (ch.6, p.100)

“We see men living with their skulls blown open; we see soldiers run with their two feet cut off, they stagger on their splintered stumps into the next shell-hole; a lance-corporal crawls a mile and a half on his hands dragging his smashed knee after him; another goes to the dressing station and over his clasped hands bulge his intestines; we see men without mouths, without jaws, without faces; we find one man who has held the artery of his arm in his teeth for two hours in order not to bleed to death. The sun goes down, night comes, the shells whine, life is at an end.” (ch.6, p.120-121)

“They are different men here, men I cannot properly understand, whom I envy and despise.” (ch.7, p.150)

“They are more to me than life, these voices, they are more than motherliness and more than fear; they are the strongest, most comforting thing there is anywhere: they are the voices of my comrades.” (ch.9, p.186)

“This dead man is bound up with my life, therefore I must do everything, promise everything in order to save myself; I swear blindly that I mean to live only for his sake and his family, with wet lips I try to placate him – and deep down in me lies the hope that I may buy myself off in this way and perhaps even get out of this; it is a little stratagem: if only I am allowed to escape, then I will see to it.” (ch.9, p.197)

“I am young, I am twenty years old; yet I know nothing of life but despair, death, fear, and fatuous superficiality cast over an abyss of sorrow. I see how peoples are set against one another, and in silence, unknowingly, foolishly, obediently, innocently slay one another. I see that the keenest brains of the world invent weapons and words to make it yet more refined and enduring. And all men of my age, here and over there, throughout the whole world see these things; all my generation is experiencing these things with me.” (ch.10, p.228)

“Germany ought to be empty soon.” (Katzinsky, ch.11, p.243)

“I am very quiet. Let the months and years come, they can take nothing from me, they can take nothing more. I am so alone, and so without hope that I can confront them without fear. The life that has borne me through these years is still in my hands and my eyes. Whether I have subdued it, I know not. But so long as it is there it will seek its own way out, heedless of the will that is within me.” (ch.12, p.254-255)

“He had fallen forward and lay on the earth as though sleeping. Turning him over one saw that he could not have suffered long; his face had an expression of calm, as though almost glad the end had come.” (Epilogue, p.256)

## ESSAY QUESTIONS

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. Erich Maria Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front* is known for the power of its descriptive passages. How do the descriptions of the settings in which the scenes of the story unfold add emotional force to the book’s impact on the reader? Choose three brief descriptive passages and analyze the language in each one, focusing on the way it elicits an emotional response. Be sure to choose passages that describe different settings and elicit different emotions.

2. Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* is narrated by a German soldier during World War I. Does the nationality of the narrator influence the message of the novel? Would the description have been equally as powerful had it involved any soldier of any nationality in any war? To what extent do the particulars of the story affect its message?
3. Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* is a powerful anti-war novel, and one of its central themes is the devastation war wreaks on the character of the soldier. As Albert Kropp remarks in chapter five, "The war has ruined us for everything." Discuss the ways in which Paul Bäumer, the narrator, changes during the course of the story. How do these changes serve as an indictment of war? Be specific.
4. Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* and T.H. White's *The Once and Future King* are both anti-war novels. Compare and contrast the ways in which the authors frame their critiques of war. Consider especially the differences between the strong realism of the first and the use of myth in the second. Which do you consider the more powerful treatment, and why?
5. Compare and contrast the quality of the realism used to portray war in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* and Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. In which novel do you consider the realism to be more effective, and why? Be sure to use detail from both books to support your conclusion.
6. Compare and contrast the views of military authority pictured in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* and Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Do the protagonists despise their officers equally, or for the same reasons? Relate these views of authority to the leading themes of the two novels.
7. Compare and contrast the role of friendship in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* and Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. To what extent do the two authors develop the concept? Which values it more, and why?
8. Both Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* and Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* are powerful anti-war novels about war. Despite the fact that one describes Germans in the First World War and the other describes the experiences of a Union soldier in the Civil War, they have much in common. Compare the two, particularly with regard to the realism of their depictions of war, the role of luck in the life of a soldier, and the ways in which the two critique heroic pictures of warfare.
9. Compare and contrast the views of war presented in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* and Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. While Remarque's book is clearly an antiwar novel, is the same true of Crane's masterpiece? Why or why not? Support your conclusion with specifics from the books.

10. Compare and contrast the protagonists in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* and Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Which man is more likeable? Which is more honest? With which man can you as a reader identify more easily? Why?
11. Compare and contrast the role of introspection in Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* and Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Which novel gives greater insight into the inner life of the protagonist? Why do you think so? To what extent does this introspection enable the reader to identify with the leading themes of the respective novels?
12. Compare and contrast Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* and Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* in the extent to which they reflect the personal war experiences of the two authors. Remarque fought in the German army during World War I, while Crane never fought, but served as a war correspondent, though only after the completion of his most famous novel. Do the respective experiences of the two authors affect the extent to which they are able to picture war from the inside? If you see differences, what are they? If not, explain why the two accounts are essentially equal in their portrayals of war.
13. In Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the German soldiers are stripped of everything that had previously given their lives meaning by the horrors of war. Christian faith never enters the story at all. To what extent can the disillusionment of the central character be ascribed to the fact that he has no value system to replace the one he loses? How would the narrative have been different had the protagonist been a Christian? Use both details from the novel and passages of Scripture to construct your hypothesis.
14. Compare and contrast the descriptions of the horrors of the Western Front during World War I found in Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* and Wilfred Owen's poem *Dulce et Decorum Est*. Both writers fought in the war, and Owen, like Paul Bäumer, died just before it ended. Would Remarque have agreed with Owen's conclusion? Why or why not?
15. How does reading Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* illuminate the postwar disillusionment portrayed in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*? Discuss the connections between Remarque's graphic depiction of the war and the personal impact of the war in the decade after the armistice pictured in Hemingway's novel.
16. One of the arguments made by the author in Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* is that war reduces man to the level of the animals. Choose three particular incidents in the novel that illustrate this idea and discuss how they do so. In what ways does God's Word shed light on this observation?

17. In Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, contrast the way war is pictured by characters like Kantorek, who bullies his students into enlisting, and Katczinsky, the veteran who, from the beginning of the story, understands the true nature of war. Assess the truth of the two contrasting views, considering that great heroes of the Bible like Joshua and David were military leaders.
18. Discuss the theme of friendship in Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Why does the author see friendship as something vital in the midst of the horrors of war? Choose three incidents from the book that illustrate the importance of friendship, and show how these incidents picture companionship as the only thing mitigating the terrors with which the young soldiers were surrounded. Is friendship equally important in the context of everyday life? Why or why not?
19. William Shakespeare, in his great tragedies, was always careful to include a few humorous scenes to provide comic relief and break up the weightiness of the larger story. To what extent does Erich Maria Remarque do the same thing in *All Quiet on the Western Front*? Choose three examples of comic relief in the novel and discuss how they actually strengthen the themes Remarque intends to communicate.
20. Discuss the use of sensory images in Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. How does the author use description in a way that engages and activates the sense of the reader? How does this increase the power of the novel and its central themes? Be sure to use specific examples in your analysis.
21. Discuss the moral impact of war as it is portrayed in Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Use specific incidents and quotations from the novel to show how morality is undermined by the horrors of warfare in the lives of the young men who are forced into it.
22. One of the ideas communicated in Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* is that war separates the soldier from normal life to the extent that he can never feel the same about it again. Why is this true? Choose three examples from the novel to illustrate this theme. How did this tendency contribute to the generation of young men who fought in the Great War being dubbed "The Lost Generation"?
23. Consider the few face-to-face encounters the protagonist has with the enemy in Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. He spends a night with French girls, interacts with Russian prisoners of war, and kills a French soldier who leaps into the trench he already occupies. How do these incidents enhance the theme the author is trying to communicate?

24. Many who have experienced the horrors of war are reluctant to talk about what they have seen. Yet Erich Maria Remarque, in *All Quiet on the Western Front*, describes his personal experiences in great detail in a fictional format. Why do some men deal with their trauma through silence, while others seek another form of therapy by telling their stories? In what way does the novel help to provide answers to both questions?
25. One of the most important incidents in Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* is when the protagonist kills a French soldier who has stumbled into the foxhole he occupies. Compare and contrast this incident with Thomas Hardy's poem, *The Man I Killed*. What lessons do the writers seek to communicate through these incidents? Does the fact that Hardy never fought in a war, while Remarque did, affect the power of their respective depictions?
26. Discuss the importance of structure in Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Note the extent to which the chapters alternate between scenes of carnage at the front and scenes of relative peace and relaxation away from it. What is the point of this alternating structure? How does it serve to emphasize the major themes of the novel?
27. The source of the title of Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* is not revealed until the final sentence of the book. Why do you think he chose this title? What does he intend it to mean in relationship to the story he tells? What is the source of the quietness, and why is it important?
28. In the epigraph of Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the author gives his reasons for writing the book. He says, "This book is to be neither an accusation nor a confession, and least of all an adventure, for death is not an adventure to those who stand face to face with it. It will try simply to tell of a generation of men who, even though they may have escaped its shells, were destroyed by the war." To what extent does he succeed in fulfilling his purpose? Support your conclusion with details from the narrative.
29. In the epigraph of Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the author tells us that he does not intend the book to be an accusation. By the time you have completed the book, do you believe him? Why or why not? Support your answer with specific incidents and quotations from the novel.
30. In the epigraph of Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the author gives his reasons for writing the book. He describes a generation of young men who, even if they managed to survive, "were destroyed by the war." He himself, of course, was part of that generation of men who fought in the war. Look up biographical information on Remarque and discuss the extent to which he was "destroyed" by his experience. What evidence can you provide to argue that he was or was not?

31. Look up biographical information about Erich Maria Remarque, the author of *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Knowing something about Remarque, are you able to locate things in the novel, particularly in the conversations among the soldiers, that really represent the voice of the author? How closely can you match some of the observations made by the soldiers in the book to the events of Remarque's life?
32. In the first chapter of Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the narrator remarks, "It is very queer that the unhappiness of the world is so often brought on by small men." Whom does Paul Bäumer come to consider "small men"? Why? Choose three specific examples and elaborate on their significance in the story.
33. Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* contains graphic scenes of war violence, such as this one from chapter six: "We see men living with their skulls blown open; we see soldiers run with their two feet cut off, they stagger on their splintered stumps into the next shell-hole; a lance-corporal crawls a mile and a half on his hands dragging his smashed knee after him; another goes to the dressing station and over his clasped hands bulge his intestines; we see men without mouths, without jaws, without faces; we find one man who has held the artery of his arm in his teeth for two hours in order not to bleed to death. The sun goes down, night comes, the shells whine, life is at an end." As unpleasant as such scenes surely are, they play an important role in the novel. Why are these scenes so essential? In what ways would the novel be lessened if they were excised?
34. In Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the narrator at one point says, "A hospital alone shows what war is." What does he mean? In what sense is this true? Are Paul's criticisms of battlefield doctors justified? Use specific incidents from the novel to support your argument, being sure to tie these to the central themes of the story.
35. By the end of Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the protagonist has found that he identifies more with the enemy soldiers against whom he is fighting than he does with his own military leaders, doctors, teachers, and even his own family. How is this transition in loyalties important to the theme of the novel? What is Remarque trying to say about war by portraying this change in his protagonist?
36. When the death of Paul Bäumer is described in the closing paragraph of Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, his dead face is said to picture calm and even joy. Why do you think this was the case? Why is this description of the protagonist's death an essential denouement to the novel?
37. To what extent is Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* a coming-of-age story? If indeed Paul Bäumer grows from boyhood to manhood in the course of the novel, what does this say about the author's conception of manhood?

38. Discuss the role of nature in Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Consider the contrasts established by the descriptions that play a part in Paul's memories, the descriptions of nature when Paul and his friends are away from the battlefield, and the descriptions of the destruction of nature associated with the war. Based on these descriptions, to what extent has the narrator been influenced by Romanticism in his youth?
39. Compare and contrast the depiction of nature and its relationship to war in Erich Maria Remarque's novel *All Quiet on the Western Front* and Carl Sandburg's poem *Grass*. Do the two share the same view of the relationship? Does the view of the narrator in Remarque's novel change in the course of the story? If so, does it come closer to or farther away from that portrayed by Sandburg?
40. In Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Albert Kropp argues that wars should be fought by putting the generals and war profiteers in a ring together and letting them fight it out so young men on both sides would not have to lose their lives. Despite the obvious attractions of such an approach, what would be its drawbacks? Is it at all realistic? Would it be wise? Consider the combat between David and Goliath in I Samuel 17 in giving your answer.
41. In the course of Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the narrator and his friends take revenge on Corporal Himmelstoss and Kantorek, their high school teacher, for the treatment they had received from the two men. Were they right to do so? Why or why not? Consider the provocations, the realities of war, and the teachings of Scripture in giving your answer.
42. In Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the soldiers at the center of the story develop a variety of psychological defense mechanisms in response to the horrors of war. What are they? Are they effective? Are they ultimately healthy? Why or why not?
43. Compare and contrast Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* and Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* in their portrayals of the impact of war on the lives and relationships of the protagonists. Consider particularly the respective outlooks on life and its meaning expressed by Yurii Zhivago and Paul Baumer.
44. Compare and contrast the views of war portrayed in Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Do the two authors arrive at the same conclusions about the nature and morality of war? Why or why not? Support your conclusions with details from both novels.
45. Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* are both known for their realistic battle scenes. Compare and contrast the two in their portrayal of the horrors of war. Which do you think more effective, and why? Be sure to support your argument with details from both novels.

46. Homer's *Iliad* is an extremely violent book. Compare the violence found there to that in Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Which is more violent? Which provides a more realistic picture of war? Be sure to consider the purpose behind the violence. Are the two authors trying to accomplish the same thing, or do they have different reasons for their graphic descriptions?
47. Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* and Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* are both antiwar novels about the realities of the First World War. Compare and contrast the two works, noting how each moves the reader to hate war as much as the characters in the stories do. Which do you consider the more effective critique of war? Support your arguments with specifics from both novels.