

Advanced Placement in  
English Literature and Composition

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

**All Quiet on the Western Front**

by Erich Maria Remarque

written by Eva Richardson

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# All Quiet on the Western Front

## Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. outline the psychological impact of plot event on character development.
2. analyze the the author's attitude toward war.
3. explore the evolving role of—and changing attitudes toward—authority.
4. discuss the novel as a critical commentary on the futility of war.
5. analyze the novel as a Bildungsroman.
6. trace the development of symbols through the novel.
7. examine the language of *All Quiet on the Western Front* and analyze the impact the first person narrative viewpoint has on the reader.
8. respond to writing prompts similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition exam.
9. respond to multiple choice questions similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition exam.
10. offer a close reading of *All Quiet on the Western Front* and support all assertions and interpretations with direct evidence from the text, from authoritative critical knowledge of the genre, or from authoritative criticism of the novel.

## Introductory Lecture

### THE “GREAT WAR”—WORLD WAR I:

World War I, also known as the “Great War,” engulfed many of the world’s powerful nations between 1914 and 1918. It remains one of the most deadly military conflicts in world history, having taken the lives of more than 15 million people.

The events that led to World War I are varied and complex. Europe’s long history of imperialism and a series of territorial disputes challenged the balance of power within Europe. An arms race throughout Europe also contributed to competition between the different colonial powers, further threatening the power equilibrium between nations. Moreover, a network of alliances in Europe that had evolved since the mid-nineteenth century had become increasingly complex, and European nations struggled to keep up with shifting diplomatic allegiances.

The two significant alliances in Europe consisted of the Triple Alliance (also known as the Central Powers) comprising Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy and the Triple Entente, formed by France, the United Kingdom, and Russia. After the beginning of the war, the United States, Japan, Portugal, Australia, and a host of other nations also became associated with the Triple Entente.

Historians generally agree that the War was ultimately triggered by the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his wife Sophie on June 28, 1914 in Sarajevo, Serbia. Austria had long hungered for an opportunity to eliminate the Serbian state, and the assassination of the Archduke proved to be an ideal opportunity to declare war on Serbia. Due to the network of alliances, the Austria-Hungarian Empire relied on support from Germany, but, at the same time, knew that declaring war on Serbia would spark a conflict with Russia. When Austria-Hungary, supported by Germany, invaded Serbia, the complicated system of treaties within Europe triggered a European-wide, and soon worldwide, military conflict—World War I.

By the summer of 1918, the Central Powers had collapsed, and an armistice was signed on November 11, 1918.

## TRENCH WARFARE

Soldiers on the Western Front in World War I saw the horrors of trench warfare, a new form of warfare that required combat troops to occupy fortified trenches. This focus on defense rather than attack forced soldiers on both sides to stay in their entrenched positions on the battlefield for lengthy periods of time. The territory between the trenches, often referred to as “No Man’s Land,” was dangerous, and leaving the trenches in order to attack the enemy exposed soldiers to machine gun and artillery fire and generally resulted in mass casualties. New types of weapons, such as gas bombs and flamethrowers, made life in the trenches even more deadly.

Life in the trenches was cruel and dehumanizing. Often, soldiers spent weeks locked in their positions, and they were surrounded by the bodies of the dead that littered the battlefield. Unsanitary conditions and the lack of medical supplies caused disease and infection to spread quickly among the soldiers. With little protection from the weather and frequent delays in the delivery of supplies to the front lines, many soldiers suffered from exposure and hunger.

The psychological effects of trench warfare on the soldiers were no less significant. Unable to leave their positions, soldiers often laid in waiting for undetermined periods of time as they prepared for the next bombardment. Many soldiers displayed symptoms of psychological breakdown and suffered the consequences of shell shock.

**MAJOR THEME: BRUTALITY AND CARNAGE:**

Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* was published in 1928 and immediately took its place within a long-standing tradition of literary representations of war. Unlike most war novels, however, Remarque's account of World War I focuses singularly on realistic depictions of life on the front line and refuses to sentimentalize and romanticize war, nationalism, and military pride. The novel depicts the life of the individual soldier in stark and un-idealized terms.

Much of the novel's plot focuses on the brutality of trench warfare on the Western Front. The novel's narrator, Paul Bäumer, explains how experiences with new weapons technologies such as gas bombs contributed to the unpredictability and brutality of life on the front lines:

“The dull thud of the gas-shells mingles with the crashes of the light explosives. A bell sounds between the explosions, gongs, and metal clappers warning everyone—Gas—Gas—Gaas. Someone plumps down behind me, another.”

Another horror of trench warfare embodied by Remarque's novel is the continuous presence of death in the trenches. With little chance to recover dead bodies from the battlefield due to the great risks soldiers took whenever they entered “No Man's Land,” troops were frequently forced to coexist with the bodies of their dead companions that littered the battlefield and were often blown asunder by explosions in times of bombardment. In unsentimental terms, Remarque's narrator Paul Bäumer represents the reality of living with the dead:

“With a crash something black bears down on us. It lands close beside us; a coffin thrown up... The coffin lid is loose and bursts open, we are easily able to pull it off, we toss the corpse out, it slides down the bottom of the shell-hole, then we try to loosen the under-part.”

The novel, however, also reminds readers that soldiers were not only faced with the death of their own comrades but likewise with the death of soldiers fighting in close proximity on the enemy's side. According to *All Quiet on the Western Front*, trench warfare caused individual soldiers to call into question why and how lines are drawn between nations and under what circumstances war is justified. In chapter nine, Paul Bäumer stabs a French soldier who is leaping into a hole where Paul is hiding. Consequently, Bäumer must face the presence of the dying soldier and his own feelings of guilt:

“By noon I am groping on the outer limits of reason. Hunger devours me, I could almost weep for something to eat, I cannot struggle against it. Again and again I fetch water for the dying man and drink some myself. This is the first time I have killed with my hands... But every gasp lays my heart bare. This dying man has time with him, he has an invisible dagger with which he stabs me: Time and my thoughts. I would give much if he would but stay alive.”

**MAJOR THEME: THE FUTILITY OF WAR:**

Immediately following its publication, *All Quiet on the Western Front* was hailed as one of the most important war novels of all time. Many critics quickly pointed out that, rather than glorifying war and championing national pride, the novel warns of the futility of war.

Erich Maria Remarque presents war in its bleak reality without romanticizing the life of the soldier, highlighting the meaninglessness of war from the individual soldier's perspective. When Paul Bäumer is faced with the death of his comrade Kemmerich, he questions why his young friend had to die for a cause he did not even understand:

“When bathing Franz Kemmerich looked as slight and frail as a child. There he lies now—but why? The whole world ought to pass by his bed and say: ‘That is Franz Kemmerich, nineteen and a half years old, he doesn’t want to die. Let him not die!’”

Bäumer also fears that the young men of his generation will be unable to overcome the horrors of war since they will not be able to come to terms with the killings they committed. Many of the soldiers do not see a purpose in taking the life of another human being simply because they were ordered to do so by their leaders in the name of war:

“The days, the weeks, the years out here shall come back again, and our dead comrades shall then stand up again and march with us, our heads shall be clear, we shall have a purpose, and so we shall march, our dead comrades beside us, the years of the Front behind us:—against whom, against whom?”

The leadership of the governments involved in the war is called into question time and time again throughout the novel. Remarque's characters are simple soldiers, far removed from the leaders of their country. They are swayed by a strong sense of nationalism and patriotic vigor, yet they are not aware of the causes leading up to the war and, months into the conflict, they can no longer see a credible purpose for fighting. To Paul Bäumer and his comrades, it becomes painfully obvious that the enemy soldier is not distinguishable from them by anything but a uniform. Beyond that, the enemy soldiers are human beings just like them. Yet, Paul and his comrades are ordered to kill them by a commander or general who received his orders from a distant government. Paul explains:

“A word of command has made these silent figures our enemies; a word of command might transform them into our friends. At some table a document is signed by some persons whom none of us knows, and then for years together that very crime on which formerly the world's condemnation and severest penalty fall, becomes our highest aim.”

The injustice of having young men carry out war orders formulated by Emperors or governments who do not take the welfare of the individual soldier into account when making their decision to go to war is one of the central concerns of the novel.

## THE THEME OF COMRADESHIP:

Companionship and comradeship are important elements in *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Throughout the novel, the fate of narrator Paul Bäumer is closely associated with the fate of his former classmates. When the war begins, Paul Bäumer and his classmates volunteer to join the army, swayed by national pride and patriotism and persuaded by the stern words of their schoolteacher Kantorek. Only one young man, Joseph Behm, hesitates to follow the others, but he is pressured into enlisting by his peers. Paul Bäumer later recalls how Behm was forced to sign up for the war by peer pressure and false patriotism: “There was, indeed, one of us who hesitated and did not want to fall into line. That was Joseph Behm, a plump, homely fellow. But he did allow himself to be persuaded, otherwise he would have been ostracized.”

During training, Paul Bäumer and his comrades soon learn that the horrors of war are too severe to be borne by each man alone. Consequently, the soldiers form a close bond that comes to function as a substitute family for the young men once they reach the front line: “But by far the most important result [of training] was that it awakened in us a strong, practical sense of *esprit de corps*, which in the field developed into the finest thing that arose out of the war—comradeship.”

In fact, when Paul Bäumer visits his family back in his hometown while on leave from his company, he realizes how detached his life as a soldier has become from the life he led as a civilian and student before the war. Paul finds that he has little in common with the men and women who remained in his hometown, and he feels misunderstood by his family and friends. Unable to shed the memories of the front and eager to rejoin his company to assist his fellow soldiers, Paul leaves his hometown and, in fact, regrets his decision to visit in the first place. He feels confused and does not understand why he is unable to relate to the very things that were important to him and occupied his time before the war began. Paul states, “I cannot feel at home amongst these things. There is my mother, there is my sister, there my case of butterflies, and there the mahogany piano—but I am not myself there.”

Paul Bäumer’s closest confidante throughout the war is his troop leader Stanislaus Katczinsky (Kat). Kat teaches Paul how to be a survivor on the front, and he becomes a role model and quasi-father figure for the young man. Paul describes his relationship with Kat as a close and intimate bond:

“We sit opposite one another, Kat and I, two soldiers in shabby coats, cooking a goose in the middle of the night. We don’t talk much, but I believe we have a more complete communion with one another than even lovers have.”

**MAJOR THEME: THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS AND DEHUMANIZING EFFECTS OF WAR:**

Throughout *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Erich Maria Remarque outlines the severe and tragic psychological implications associated with life on the front line. Remarque describes the devastating effects the involvement in war and the killing of fellow human beings can have on the individual soldier. When faced with the reality of death and carnage, soldiers quickly lose their humanity and commit atrocious acts in the name of war. Remarque's narrator explains:

“We march up, moody or good-tempered soldiers—we reach the zone where the front begins and become on the instant human animals...Farther on the mist ends. Here the heads become figures; coats, trousers, and boots appear out of the mist as from a milky pool. They become a column...A column—not men at all.”

Remarque frequently uses language that likens the young soldiers to animals, indicating that the soldiers' lost humanity is replaced by a predatory instinct that enables them to move forward and continue attacking the enemy. Bäumer recalls, “[w]e have become wild beasts. We do not fight, we defend ourselves against annihilation.”

Later, Bäumer describes how committing murder contributes to a loss of humanity among the soldiers:

“[C]rouching like cats we run on, overwhelmed by this wave that bears us along, that fills us with ferocity, turns us into thugs, into murderers, into God only knows what devils...But we are swept forward again, powerless, madly savage and raging; we will kill, for they are still our mortal enemies.”

Paul Bäumer explains that this process of dehumanization is unavoidable and happens inevitably when human beings are forced to commit murder in the name of war. It becomes a coping mechanism that allows these men to commit deeds they are morally and ethically opposed to. But many soldiers are unable to come to terms with the reality of war. Paul Bäumer claims that many of his comrades, and particularly the younger recruits, often crumble under the psychological pressure of warfare:

“By midday what I expected happens. One of the recruits has a fit. I have been watching him for a long time, grinding his teeth and opening and shutting his fists. These hunted, protruding eyes, we know them too well. During the last few hours he has had merely the appearance of calm. He had collapsed like a rotten tree.”

After World War I, the soldiers who had entered the war at a very young age became known as the **Lost Generation**. They felt empty and without direction after the end of the war, since they had no life to return to and had become adults only within the context of the war. In the novel, Paul and his comrades discuss the difficulties of returning to a different life after the war ends:

“Albert expresses it: ‘The war has ruined us for everything.’ He is right. We are not youth any longer. We don’t want to take the world by storm. We are fleeing. We fly from ourselves. From our life. We were eighteen and had begun to love life and the world; and we had to shoot it to pieces.”<sup>78</sup> Later, Paul Bäumer reflects on his inability to adjust to a life outside of war: “We are forlorn like children, and experienced like old men, we are crude and sorrowful and superficial—I believe we are lost.”

Many soldiers emerging from World War I suffered from shell shock, a disorder now better known as post-traumatic stress disorder.

## Literary and Narrative Techniques:

### INTRODUCTION

Erich Maria Remarque prefaces his novel with a brief introductory paragraph that expresses his purpose in presenting a story of war.

“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 shells, were destroyed by the war.”

The introduction warns that the novel does not follow the conventional format of a war novel. Remarque simply and directly outlines his purpose for telling the story of Paul Bäumer and his companions and announces to his readers that *All Quiet on the Western Front* is a book that aims to describe the unspeakable effects war has had on a generation of young men.

### NARRATIVE VIEWPOINT

*All Quiet on the Western Front* is written from the perspective of a first-person narrator. Events are told from the perspective of a young soldier, Paul Bäumer. In the last paragraph of the book, the narrative viewpoint switches from first person to third person. In this closing paragraph, the death of Paul Bäumer is recounted by a third-person narrator.

### SYMBOLISM

The image of Kemmerich's boots functions as one of the most powerful symbols throughout the novel. The boots come to signify the dehumanization of the soldiers and their loss of identity. When Kemmerich is in the hospital, one of his comrades, Müller, expresses his desire to take the boots, since his own shoes are worn and tattered. Müller believes that Kemmerich no longer benefits from having the beautiful boots, because he is close to death and unlikely to return to the battlefield.

Paul Bäumer gives the boots to Müller after Kemmerich's death. As the novel progresses, the boots move from one soldier to the next—as one man dies, another takes his boots. Hence, the boots become a powerful symbol for the disposability of the individual soldier. Only the soldier's skills and endurance are needed in the war; his individual character and humanity, however, are expendable and replaceable.

### ELEMENTS OF BILDUNGSROMAN

*All Quiet on the Western Front* contains elements of the **Bildungsroman** genre. In a typical **Bildungsroman**, the hero embarks on a journey that will lead him away from his familiar surroundings in his quest for experience. Paul Bäumer and his comrades enlist in the war and leave their hometown when they are merely teenagers, barely out of school. As the war progresses, Paul and his friends are forced to abandon the world of their childhood and learn how to survive in a world marked by war and destruction.

### Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. What is the significance of Kemmerich's boots throughout the novel?
2. What attitudes toward the war are expressed by the soldiers?
3. What psychological effect does the war have on the soldiers at the front line?
4. In what ways does the novel function as a war novel? As an anti-war novel?
5. What is the importance of comradeship for the soldiers?
6. How does the novel represent and criticize the role of teachers?
7. How is Paul Bäumer a character who is representative of all soldiers?
8. Why is Paul Bäumer unable to relate to his family when he returns to his hometown?
9. How does the novel address the question of responsibility with regard to the war?
10. How does life on the front line differ from life during training?
11. What characterizes the relationship between Paul Bäumer and Kat?
12. How does the novel describe the challenges faced by the "Lost Generation"?
13. How does the novel provide commentary on the futility of war?
14. How does the novel represent the notion of guilt for the soldiers fighting in the war?

## Practice Free Response Questions

### PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 1:

Carefully read the passage from chapter one of *All Quiet on the Western Front* that begins with “Kantorek had been our schoolmaster...” and ends with “...and alone we must see it through.” Then, in a well-organized essay, describe and analyze how Paul Bäumer evaluates the role of educators and authority figures. Be sure to ground all your assertions firmly in the text.

Carefully read the passage from chapter three of *All Quiet on the Western Front* that begins with, “We couldn’t do without Kaczkinsky...” and ends with, “...we would rather have had a good beef steak.” Then, in a well-organized essay, analyze the character of Kaczkinsky. Consider the role Kat plays within his company and how the other soldiers perceive him as a leader, fellow soldier, and friend. Establish a clear thesis, and support your ideas from references from the passage.

Do not merely summarize the passage.

### PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 2:

Carefully read the passage from chapter four of *All Quiet on the Western Front* that begins with, “At the sound of the first droning...” and ends with “...it is strangely beautiful and arresting.” Then, in a well-organized essay, analyze how the ways in which the passage depicts the dehumanizing effects of war.

Do not merely summarize the passage.

### FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 3:

Carefully read the passage from chapter five of *All Quiet on the Western Front* that begins with “Müller hasn’t finished yet...” and ends with, “...we believe in the war.” Then, in a well-organized essay, analyze the connection between war and identity Bäumer.

Do not merely summarize the passage.

**PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 4:**

Novels and plays are often structured around a central or unifying symbol that contributes to the development of plot, character, and theme. In a well-organized essay, explain how references to Kemmerich's boots in Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* provide such a unifying symbol. Be sure to support your assertions with specific examples from the text.

Do not merely summarize the plot.

**PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 5:**

The titles of many novels and plays are often chosen to reflect a major theme of the work. Often, the title serves as an ironic commentary on the work's characters or plot. Write a thoughtful and well-developed essay in which you analyze the significance of the title of Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

**PRACTICE FREE RESPONSE QUESTION 6:**

Much of the literature of the first half of the twentieth century reflects the spirit of apathy or ennui that characterized the writers of the Lost Generation. Write a well-developed and –organized essay in which you discuss Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* as an example of a Lost Generation work.

Do not merely summarize the plot.

## Practice Multiple Choice Questions

### PRACTICE MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 1-5:

Carefully read the passage from chapter three of *All Quiet on the Western Front* that begins with “Reinforcements have arrived...” and ends with “You get off scot free, of course.” Then, select the best answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

1. The use of the term “vacancies” to describe the missing soldiers is an example of
  - A. exaggeration.
  - B. symbolism.
  - C. euphemism.
  - D. metaphor.
  - E. synecdoche.
  
2. Paul’s use of the phrase “stone-age veterans” indicates his belief that
  - A. his time at the front line have turned him into an experienced soldier.
  - B. the war has been going on for too long.
  - C. Paul and his fellows have been deployed for a long time.
  - D. he and his fellows are veterans of a previous war.
  - E. the young recruits should look up to him.
  
3. The simile in the phrase “Katzinsky plants himself in front of it like a general” indicates all the following *except* that Kat
  - A. immediately establishes a hierarchy among the soldiers.
  - B. is an experienced and knowledgeable soldier.
  - C. is an influential man in his company.
  - D. challenges his superiors by acting like a general.
  - E. has exceptional leadership qualities.
  
4. Kat teaches the new recruits the lesson that
  - A. rations are usually plentiful on the front line.
  - B. getting extra rations is a matter of exchange.
  - C. new recruits are treated better than the more experienced soldiers.
  - D. new recruits are treated as well as the more experienced soldiers.
  - E. life on the front line is often marked by starvation.
  
5. Kat’s demeanor and tone in the passage can be characterized as
  - A. calm.
  - B. condescending.
  - C. nurturing.
  - D. introverted.
  - E. intimidating.

## PRACTICE MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 6-10:

Carefully read the passage from chapter four of *All Quiet on the Western Front* that begins with “There is no escape anywhere...” and ends with “...I let go and with a jump drop into the shell-hole.” Then, select the best answers to the following multiple-choice questions,

6. The purpose of the metaphor comparing the battlefield to a “surging sea” is to suggest the
  - A. impossibility of escape.
  - B. magnitude of the battle.
  - C. visual appearance of the battle.
  - D. narrator’s fear.
  - E. movements of the troops.
  
7. Remarque uses short, choppy sentences to describe the battlefield in order to
  - A. show the quick succession of events and the confusion prevalent on the battlefield.
  - B. show the swiftness with which the German troops are pushing back the enemy.
  - C. show how quickly time passes during a bombardment.
  - D. indicate how short-lived a soldier’s life can be.
  - E. foreshadow the coming end of the war.
  
8. The figurative device used in the line “I shoot as flat as a fish over the ground” is
  - A. exaggeration.
  - B. simile.
  - C. personification.
  - D. understatement.
  - E. alliteration.
  
9. The sentence, “...I merely crawl still farther under the coffin, it shall protect me, though Death himself lies in it”, contains all of the following *except*
  - A. irony.
  - B. synecdoche.
  - C. allegory.
  - D. ambiguity.
  - E. foreshadowing.
  
10. The narrative mode which best describes this passage is
  - A. stream of consciousness.
  - B. unreliable narrative voice.
  - C. first-person omniscient.
  - D. third-person subjective.
  - E. epistolary narrative.

## PRACTICE MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 11-15:

Carefully read the passage from chapter six of *All Quiet on the Western Front* that begins, “Towards morning, while it is still dark...” and ends, “We sit as though in a boiler that is being belaboured from without on all sides.” Then, select the best answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

11. The narrator indicates that soldiers slaughter the rats not only to defend the food supply but also to
  - A. ward off boredom.
  - B. stay in shape physically.
  - C. practice alertness and swift action.
  - D. ward off disease.
  - E. vent pent up energy and frustration.
  
12. Remarque’s use of simile in the phrase “he had collapsed like a rotten tree” reveals the
  - A. psychological effects of shell shock on the new recruit.
  - B. author’s humorous side.
  - C. increasing age of the new recruits.
  - D. physical exhaustion experienced by the newly recruited soldiers.
  - E. low stamina prevalent on the front lines.
  
13. In the context of this passage, the word “hiding” is best defined as
  - A. averting one’s gaze.
  - B. removing an animal’s skin.
  - C. disguising.
  - D. a severe beating.
  - E. concealing from sight.
  
14. The atmosphere in the dugout can be characterized as
  - A. tense and dangerous.
  - B. calm and apprehensive.
  - C. violent and confrontational.
  - D. peaceful and harmonious.
  - E. anticipatory and eager.
  
15. The theme of the passage concentrates on the
  - A. monotony experienced by the soldiers.
  - B. effects of comradeship on morale.
  - C. brutality and carnage present in war.
  - D. dehumanization of individual soldiers.
  - E. psychological effects of war.

## PRACTICE MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 16-20:

Carefully read the passage from chapter nine of Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* that begins, "There's a great deal of polishing being done..." and ends, "...without the State there wouldn't be any home country." Then, select the best answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

16. In the first part of this passage (from "There's a great deal..." to "...the same as I have"), Tjaden seems primarily preoccupied with
- A. his distaste for pomp and ceremony.
  - B. the power that status confers.
  - C. the Kaiser's appearance.
  - D. class differences.
  - E. admiration for the Kaiser.
17. Kat's attitude throughout this passage can best be characterized as
- A. pragmatic.
  - B. pensive.
  - C. peevisish.
  - D. pusillanimous.
  - E. prissy.
18. Albert initiates a discussion that most closely relates to the novel's theme of
- A. carnage and bloodshed.
  - B. comradeship.
  - C. national pride.
  - D. false patriotism.
  - E. war's futility.
19. Tjaden recognizes that the main problem of using the word "country" when talking about war is that it
- A. avoids the question of who is responsible for initiating a war.
  - B. makes it easy for a patriotic soldier to do his duty.
  - C. makes it possible to understand who the enemy is.
  - D. helps draw the lines on the battlefield.
  - E. underscores the political nature of war.
20. Kat's differentiation between State and home-country reveals the
- A. confusion over who starts a war.
  - B. source of national pride experienced by all citizens.
  - C. sense of patriotism that encourages young men to enlist in the war.
  - D. unawareness of political systems.
  - E. disconnect between the citizen and the political structure.

## PRACTICE MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS 21-25:

Carefully read the passage from chapter eleven of *All Quiet on the Western Front* that begins, “Müller is dead...” and ends, “Dismiss!” Then, select the best answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

21. Paul Bäumer’s death is being foreshadowed
  - A. by the empty food chambers.
  - B. by the descriptions of new weaponry.
  - C. when the narrator discusses the problem of dysentery.
  - D. when Müller dies and passes Kemmerich’s boots on to Paul.
  - E. because young, new recruits are coming to the front lines.
  
22. Remarque uses the repetition of the phrase “too many” in order to
  - A. contrast the number of soldiers with the amount of food.
  - B. predict the end of war.
  - C. show that there is no chance for Germany to win the war.
  - D. indicate that the soldiers have a surplus of ammunition.
  - E. show that the German army still has new recruits.
  
23. Remarque employs the use of a sentence fragment when he describes the newly recruited soldiers arriving on the front lines to show that
  - A. the new recruits bring a fresh perspective to the front line.
  - B. the older soldiers do not get along with the new recruits.
  - C. the new recruits die in masses on the front line.
  - D. thousands of new recruits are arriving daily.
  - E. Paul has lost track of the new recruits.
  
24. The narrator describes the treatment of the wounded in the war hospital as
  - A. caring and attentive.
  - B. insufficient and indifferent.
  - C. excessive and unnecessary.
  - D. resourceful and restorative.
  - E. progressive and effective.
  
25. The tone of the passage can best be characterized as
  - A. hopeless and desperate.
  - B. calm and composed.
  - C. confused and irritated.
  - D. ashamed and regretful.
  - E. exhilarated and happy.

## MULTIPLE CHOICE ANSWERS

### WITH EXPLANATIONS

1. The term “vacancies” is used to soften a harsh reality: the new recruits are replacing soldiers who have recently died. Therefore, euphemism (C) is the only logical answer.
2. (B) is incorrect because the phrase refers directly to the experience of the soldiers, not the duration of the war. (C) is similarly incorrect; the soldiers believe themselves to be “stone-age veterans” in comparison to the recruits. Paul and his fellow soldiers have no previous war experience, so (D) is incorrect. There is no textual evidence to support (E). **The tone of the passage indicates that Paul believes he and his friends are highly experienced and knowledgeable soldiers. Therefore, (A) is the best answer.**
3. The key word in the simile is “general.” Generals are at the top of a hierarchy (A), they are experienced and knowledgeable (B), they are influential (C), and they have exceptional leadership qualities (E). **The only thing not indicated here is that Kat challenges his superiors (D). In this scene, Kat is not challenging anyone else’s authority, he is simply establishing his own.**
4. While rations at the front are not exactly plentiful, the soldiers do not experience starvation. Therefore, (A) and (E) are incorrect. There is no evidence that new recruits are treated as well as or better than experienced soldiers, so (C) and (D) are incorrect. **Kat is happy to procure extra rations for his men, but this passage makes clear that he will require something in exchange for the extra food. (B) is the best answer.**
5. Kat is neither condescending (B) nor intimidating (E). He is friendly to the other soldiers in his company. He is not nurturing (C); although he provides food and advice, he is stern and displays a no-nonsense attitude. He is certainly not introverted (D). **When the new recruit openly doubts that Kat has extra food, Kat does not take this personally. Instead, he calmly shows the recruit the food and feeds him. (A) is the best answer.**
6. Answer (A) is a tempting choice, but the author has already written plainly that escape is impossible. There is no need for the author to employ a metaphor to explain what has already been explained. A sea is large, but the qualifier “surging” indicates that the metaphor is used to describe the violence of the battlefield rather than its size or magnitude (B). Paul’s fear (D) is not mentioned anywhere in this passage. The author explains that it is impossible for anyone in either army to break through, so (E) cannot be correct. **The key to this question is the phrase which follows the metaphor. This phrase continues to build upon the water imagery suggested by “surging sea.” When examined in context, it is clear that the metaphor is used to give a description of the visual appearance of the battle (C).**

7. This passage does not contain information about the progress of the German troops, so (B) is incorrect. There is no indication that time is passing quickly (C); many events are happening in quick succession, but this does not mean that time itself seems to be passing any faster. The use of short sentences does not indicate anything about the length of a soldier's life (D); most of the sentences indicate chaos and destruction. The passage contains no information about the end of the war, so (E) is incorrect. **The short, choppy sentences are used to indicate that many events are happening in quick succession. Furthermore, they are used to show that the narrator cannot maintain a singular line of thought in the chaos of the battle. The best answer is (A).**
8. **A simile is a comparison using like or as. Thus, (B) is the only correct answer.**
9. The fact that Paul crawls under the remains of a coffin—the resting place of the deceased—to protect himself from death is ironic, so (A) is incorrect. Remarque capitalizes the word “Death” to signify that the dead body is symbolic as well as literal. Death—the allegorical (C) figure—is present on the battlefield. All figurative language includes ambiguity (D) in some way. The references to death and the fact that Paul is crawling beneath a coffin are instances of foreshadowing (E). **Synecdoche (B) is the use of a part of something to represent the whole. Synecdoche is not present in this sentence.**
10. Though there is a lot of confusion present in this scene, there is no suggestion that the narrator is unreliable (B). The narration is in the first person, but the narrator does not know the thoughts of other characters and therefore is not omniscient (C); the fact that this is first-person narration eliminates (D) as well. The narrative is not presented in a series of letters, so (E) is incorrect. **Though the narrative is not stream of consciousness in a very strict sense, there are enough elements present (clipped sentences, unusual punctuation, etc.) to make (A) the best answer.**
11. The soldiers are not bored (A), they are on edge. They are trained soldiers, so they are in reasonably good shape (B). Because they are trained soldiers, they should not have to practice alertness and swift action (C) at the front. Killing the rats may ward off disease (D), but this is not mentioned as a reason for killing them. **The soldiers are on edge because they do not know when the next bombardment will arrive. Remarque writes, “[t]he madness and despair of many hours unloads itself in this outburst.” The soldiers slaughter the rats to vent pent up energy and frustration (E).**
12. There is certainly nothing humorous (B) about the description of the recruit or this passage in general. The simile does not present a reference to age (C). The recruits seem to be generally healthy; due to the tension evident in this scene, the reader should assume that the recruit's problems are psychological, not physical. This eliminates (D) and (E). **The young recruit is experiencing severe psychological pressure. He cannot handle the tense atmosphere of the front, and he is suffering from shell shock (A).**

13. Based on the fact that Kat and Paul must give the recruit a “hiding” to “bring him to his senses,” and that they do it “quickly and mercilessly,” the reader should infer that “hiding” means “a severe beating” (D) in the context of this passage. Another clue to the reader is that “hiding” is preceded by the article “a;” the article denotes that a noun must follow, and answer (D) contains the only noun phrase.
14. Many of the soldiers are fearful, so (B) is incorrect. The soldiers are not violent (C) toward one another; they continue to act like comrades. This is not a peaceful or harmonious scene (D); several soldiers cause quite a ruckus due to their fears about being shelled. These soldiers are certainly not anticipatory and eager (E). **The only appropriate answer is (A). The only action the soldiers can take is no action; waiting causes tension to build, and the recruits who try to run blindly out into danger risk the lives of others in their company.**
15. The soldiers have nothing to do but wait for the next bombardment. This could be described as monotonous (A), but the atmosphere is far too tense for this description to be the best answer. There is no discussion on comradeship (B) in this passage, and being close to one another does not seem to help the soldiers who are suffering from shell shock. Brutality and carnage (C) are present in the attack on the rats and the death of the recruit who rushes out of the dug-out, but both of these events have (E) as their common cause. Dehumanization (D) is present in the savage beating Paul and Kat are forced to give a recruit, but this is only one incident and not the focus of the passage. **The soldiers under bombardment are feeling the psychological effects of war (E). These effects are manifested and explained in several ways: the “madness and despair” unleashed in the attack on the rats; the irrational actions of the recruit who feels he must escape the dug-out at any cost; the escape, and subsequent death, of one of the recruits; and a recruit’s repeated beating of his own head against the wall.**
16. The entire company, not just Tjaden, dislikes the fact that they are forced to endure what they believe to be pointless parade marches and inspections, so (A) is incorrect. Paul relates much more about the Kaiser’s appearance (C) than Tjaden. Answer (D) may be tempting because Tjaden is interested in what separates the Kaiser from a king or an emperor. However, he is interested in one aspect of class differences, not class differences as a whole. Tjaden does not express admiration for the Kaiser (E) specifically. **Tjaden is impressed by the fact that everyone must “stand up stiff” in front of the Kaiser. It is this difference in power (B) between the Kaiser and the rest of the German people, and between a king and an emperor, that preoccupies Tjaden.**

17. Kat is certainly not pensive (B) in this passage. Peevish (C) may be tempting for two reasons: it is used early in the passage, and Kat speaks somewhat harshly to Tjaden. However, Remarque gives no indication that Kat is irritated when he chastises Tjaden. Kropp “growls” at and speaks “sourly” toward Tjaden, but Kat’s speech is given none of these qualifiers. There is no textual evidence to support either (D) or (E). **The key to this answer lies in Kat’s statement, “[t]he main point is that you have to stand stiff yourself.” Tjaden wonders about the power relationships between kings and emperors, but Kat is most concerned with the practical consequences of those relationships. The best answer is (A).**
18. The discussion has nothing to do with carnage and bloodshed (A) or comradeship (B). National pride (C) is not a theme in the novel and is only referred to indirectly. There is nothing in this passage about false patriotism (D). **Tjaden’s absurd responses in this passage highlight the pointless absurdity of war itself (E).**
19. **Tjaden realizes that the idea of a country is an abstraction. The individual members of a country do not feel animosity against individual members of another country. One piece of land cannot hate another. The concept of country is used by leaders to drum up support for a war, but it is ultimately the leaders’ choice to go to war. This abstraction is best defined in answer (A).**
20. Kat and the others determine that the rulers of a country decide to go to war; therefore, there is no confusion, and (A) is incorrect. There is nothing to suggest (B) or (C). Kat may not have great knowledge of political systems (D), but that is not something revealed in this discussion. **The discussion is about the differences between the desires of the individual countrymen and the desires of the State. Therefore, (E) is the best answer.**
21. Answer (A) concerns the food stores of the German army; this doesn’t foreshadow anything about Paul specifically. Similarly, (B) concerns the weapons the entire German army faces, not just Paul. Dysentery (C) is a widespread problem, and can be fatal if untreated, but there is nothing in this passage connecting dysentery with the death of soldiers. Furthermore, this is once again a general problem, not specific to Paul. Answer (E) is nonsensical. **Paul’s death is being foreshadowed when he receives Kemmerich’s boots (D); the boots are passed from soldier to soldier and represent the expendability of soldiers in war. This is the only option that relates directly and specifically to Paul.**
22. The phrase “too many” is used in reference to the weapons and soldiers of the English and American armies. It does not refer to the fact that the German army has too little food, so (A) is incorrect. Answer (B) is tempting because the end of the war is drawing near, but this is not the best answer. Again, this phrase does not refer to the German army’s status, so (D) and (E) are both incorrect. **The fact that there are “too many” English and American troops and “too many” guns and aeroplanes indicates that the German army is all but defeated. The best answer is (C).**

23. In the section concerning the new recruits, Remarque uses one sentence fragment. This fragment directly follows the statement that the new recruits “merely know how to die.” The fragment clearly points out that the new recruits die in masses at the front (C).
24. This passage seems to indicate that there are only two options for wounded soldiers: the amputation of wounded limbs or no treatment at all. If the limb is not amputated, the soldier is marked “A1,” or fit for duty, and sent back to the front. This mechanical response is certainly not caring or attentive (A). Though treatments are described as excessive and unnecessary (C) earlier in the novel, this passage alone does not describe them as such. If the soldiers are either having limbs amputated or being sent directly to the front, the treatment cannot be resourceful and restorative (D) or progressive and effective (E). **The impersonal nature of the doctors’ diagnoses and the fact that they are sending wounded soldiers back to the front should tell the reader that the treatment is insufficient and uncaring (B).**
25. Given the circumstances facing the German army at this point in the novel, (B) does not fit. Paul understands completely what he is up against, and there is little to suggest that he is irritated, so (C) is out as well. There is nothing to suggest (D) or especially (E). **The passage indicates that there is no hope, either for the individual soldiers or the German army as a whole. The best answer is (A).**

# All Quiet on the Western Front

## Chapter One

1. What is ironic about the additional rations made available to the soldiers at the start of chapter one?

*The soldiers have just returned from the front lines. Upon their arrival, they receive additional rations of cigarettes, coffee, bread, and stew. Ironically, the soldiers are only receiving additional items due to a “miscalculation”: while deployed to the front line, the company suffered heavy casualties under enemy bombardment. Only a fraction of the soldiers returns to the encampment. However, the cook had not been informed of the change in number and prepared enough food to feed the many soldiers who did not return.*

2. How does the use of the latrines illustrate that definitions of privacy have changed for the soldiers who are well-established with their companies?

*The narrator explains that, upon arriving as new recruits, he and his fellow soldiers were embarrassed to use the common latrines. They were ashamed to use the open latrines and tried to keep their private needs hidden from the other soldiers. Once the soldiers became more experienced, their definition of privacy changed: no longer was using the bathroom in private a priority: instead, spending time with fellow soldiers and building a bond of friendship and camaraderie became the new priority. Consequently, the soldiers no longer hesitated to use the latrines in open view. In fact, they often gathered the moveable seats in a circle with their fellow soldiers so they could converse while meeting their bodily needs. Paul Bäumer indicates that “our families and our teachers will be shocked when we go home.”*

3. According to the narrator, which character provided the motivation for the young men to enlist in the army?

*Paul Bäumer explains that their old schoolmaster Kantorek urged him and his friends to enlist in the army. Consequently, Paul and his entire class became volunteers.*

4. What does the fact that all boys volunteered reveal about the theme of comradeship?

*Encouraged by Kantorek, Paul and his fellow classmates eagerly volunteer to become soldiers in the army. One young boy, however, Joseph Behm, initially does not want to sign up. It is not until his friends pressure him into following suit that he enlists in the army as well. Joseph Behm is a victim of peer pressure. His enlistment indicates that, while the sense of comradeship among the young men is generally a positive force, the close bond between friends can also have negative consequences. Against his will, young Joseph Behm was compelled to join the army due to the pressure of his peer group.*

5. In what ways does the chapter criticize the influence of authority figures?

*Paul Bäumer explains that the schoolmaster Kantorek was instrumental in encouraging the young boys of his class to sign up for the military. In retrospect, however, Paul comes to criticize his teacher. He indicates that, as a schoolmaster, Kantorek was a trusted and respected figure. Hence, the young boys eagerly enlisted when he urged them to join the forces. Yet, the schoolteacher seems oblivious to the reality of war. While he boasts a sense of national pride, he does not understand how grueling life on the front lines truly is. Paul Bäumer explains that “while they continued to write and talk, we saw the wounded and dying.” What is more, Paul feels that the national pride expressed by Kantorek and other authority figures is a blind patriotism—it does not distinguish “the false from true.”*

6. How do Kemmerich's boots function as a symbol?

*Once Kemmerich dies, the boots pass on to Müller and equip him to become a target for the enemy. When Müller is killed, the boots will pass on to another, and so on. The boots, thus, become a symbol for the disposability of the individual soldier's life.*

7. What is ironic about Paul Bäumer's statement “we are old folk”?

*When Paul says “we are old,” he ponders the experience he and his fellow soldiers have gathered in just a short amount of time on the front line. His expression is ironic because Paul and his friends are young, barely twenty years old, but the war has quickly forced them to grow up and become experienced soldiers. On the front line, an individual's age is relative.*

## Chapter Two

1. In what ways does the war affect the identities of older soldiers differently from younger soldiers?

*According to Paul Bäumer, older soldiers already have had a chance to establish their identities prior to entering the war. They have wives, professions, and other goals in life. Younger soldiers, on the other hand, have no previous experience and have not yet established who they are as human beings. Hence, the war becomes their identity, shaping who they are for the rest of their lives. Without the war, many of these young men will feel lost and without a sense of self.*

2. What does training teach the young soldiers about authority?

*Training changes the way Paul and his fellow soldiers look at authority: people who might have been in positions of authority prior to the war are no longer the people the soldiers now need to obey. On the other hand, individuals such as the postman, who had no authority over the young men before the war, are suddenly the authorities due to their military rank. The established rules of authority from pre-war times no longer apply.*

3. How does the phrase “circus ponies” help establish the role of the soldiers and relate to the theme of national pride?

*Paul uses the phrase “circus ponies” to describe how young soldiers are drilled to become patriotic and heroic. The phrase clearly indicates that blind obedience is required of the soldiers. They are expected to be patriotic and heroic without questioning why the war is being fought or whether fighting the war is justified. The phrase helps underscore the novel’s criticism of false patriotism and blind obedience.*

4. How does the chapter characterize Corporal Himmelstoss?

*Corporal Himmelstoss is described as strict and overbearing. He often forces the soldiers to complete menial tasks as punishment for minor transgressions. The soldiers dislike Himmelstoss, and they find his methods to be severe and unfair.*

5. What theme is described by the term “esprit de corps”?

*The term esprit de corps helps establish the theme of comradeship. Paul Bäumer considers the friendship among the soldiers to be “the finest thing that arose out of the war.”*

6. In what ways does the experience of being naked call into question the identity of the soldiers and at the same time underscore the powerful burden of wearing a uniform?

*Paul Bäumer explains that the soldiers never return to their pre-war selves unless they are taking a bath and take off their uniforms. Naked, the soldiers become young boys again, vulnerable and human. Paul explains that the soldiers “become civilians again” when they take off their uniforms. Clearly, the uniforms have a transformative effect on the young men: in uniform, the individual identities of the soldiers disappear. In the same way, however, the uniforms help give the soldiers a sense of strength and courage they may not feel when they are naked and stripped of their military identities.*

7. How does Kemmerich’s death affect Paul Bäumer’s outlook on the purpose of war?

*When Kemmerich dies, Paul Bäumer questions the reasons for his death. He does not understand why a young man has to die so that a war can be fought. Kemmerich did not want to die, and Paul questions the sacrifice he has to make for a cause he does not even understand.*

### Chapter Three

1. How does the euphemism “vacancies” in the first line of the chapter underscore the expendability of the individual in war?

*The term “vacancies” is a euphemism to describe the empty spots of the many soldiers who have died in the war. The euphemism underscores the expendability of the individual soldier: instead of acknowledging that many soldiers have died, Generals and military leaders view the open slots as “vacancies” ready to be filled by new recruits. The loss of the individual soldier is irrelevant to the military leaders as long as his place can easily be filled by a new recruit.*

2. In what ways does Kropp’s idea of war as a “popular festival” help establish Remarque’s criticism?

*Kropp proposes a new form of war in which war is conducted as a popular festival, “like a bull fight.” He suggests that the “ministers and generals of the two countries” gather in an arena and fight out their disagreements. Kropp’s idea helps establish Remarque’s criticism of the distant leaders who send wave after wave of their young men into battle but stay far removed from fighting and bloodshed themselves. Kropp’s idea shows that the men who decide to go to war are not the same men who actually fight and die in the name of war. The purpose for going to war is often obscured to the men fighting for their countries.*

3. How does a uniform impact the character of a man like Himmelstoss?

*Himmelstoss is a particularly ruthless Corporal. Kropp argues that the uniforms have an impact on the personalities of all men in war: “As sure as they get a stripe or a star they become different men.” Uniforms have the power to transform an individual’s identity: while wearing a uniform, individuals embrace the role the uniform represents, and it becomes part of their personality.*

4. According to Kat, what is the basic principle of war?

*Kat explains that power is the guiding principle of war: “the army is based on that; one man must always have power over the other.”*

5. Why does Remarque use the simile “like a signalmast” to describe the way Haie Westhus raises his arm to strike Himmelstoss?

*A signalmast (or signal mast) is a mast, erected on land, used to send signals. In naval use, flags are raised on the signalmast to send communications. Haie Westhus is sending a message to Himmelstoss: the troops will no longer accept Himmelstoss’s harsh treatment of them.*

## Chapter Four

1. How does Paul Bäumer's metaphor help describe the terror of war?

*Paul Bäumer states that the front is a "mysterious whirlpool." The metaphor helps describe the danger of life on the front line. The front line is a "vortex" that inevitably sucks the soldiers into its center. From there, there is rarely a chance of escape. Life on the front line is dangerous, and death is often inescapable.*

2. How does the front transform the soldiers?

*According to Paul Bäumer, the front turns soldiers into animals. Survival is possible only through instinct.*

3. What simile is used to describe the bombardment by the French experienced by Paul and his fellow soldiers, and how does the simile help create an image of life on the front line?

*Paul explains that the French rockets "light up everything as bright as day." Not only do the lights indicate without a doubt that a bombardment is in the near distance and approaching, but the simile also helps describe the confusion prevalent on the front line: the difference between night and day disintegrates when the soldiers are bombarded. The distance between the sky and the ground suddenly becomes smaller, and rockets and other artillery threaten to kill soldiers in masses.*

4. Why does Paul allow the crying young recruit to hide under his arm during the bombardment?

*Paul has compassion for the young recruit who is terrified of the bombardment because the young recruit reminds Paul of Kemmerich, his friend who died without understanding why. Paul knows that the youngest and newest soldiers are not trained well enough to be prepared for the harshness of the front line.*

5. Why is Detering particularly affected when he sees the injured horses?

*Detering is a farmer, so he is used to working with animals every day. When he encounters the injured horses, he insists that they be shot and put out of their misery. The wounded horses remind Detering that many living beings suffer from the consequences of war. Like many a young soldier, the horses did not make a conscious decision to join the war. They were merely railroaded into the war and now suffer the consequences of the decisions made by distant leaders and governments.*

6. To what extent do descriptions of the gas attack help paint an image of the brutality and war and the vast degree of carnage suffered on all sides?

*The gas attack forces the Germans to seek a hiding place in holes in the ground. Because a cemetery is near, the gas attack soon opens the soldiers' eyes to the reality of war's carnage. As the bombs ravage the ground, the earth is torn asunder, and the bodies buried in the cemetery are blown across the battlefield. For the soldiers in hiding, the attack is a reminder of the proximity of death: as they are seeking shelter, body parts of the deceased litter their hiding holes and force the soldiers to be side by side with death.*

7. What effect does the simile "like cold water" produce on the reader?

*When the gas attack is finally over and the soldiers are able to lift their gas masks, Paul Bäumer observes how the "air streams into [him] like cold water." The simile helps describe the overwhelming sense of relief Paul experiences when he is finally able to remove the mask. Under the mask, Paul did not know how much air he had available before he would inevitably suffocate. Once he is able to lift the mask, Paul feels revived.*

8. How is Kat's desire to shoot the young injured soldier ironic? What does it echo?

*Kat's desire is simply to put the young man out of his misery. The ironic reality of war is that death is often more desirable than survival. Kat's desire echoes Detering's concern for the wounded horses. He also wanted the innocent beasts put out of their misery.*

## **Chapter Five**

1. What is the soldiers' attitude toward the knowledge they learned in school?

*While quizzing themselves on the knowledge they remember from school, the soldiers realize that what they learned as young boys is irrelevant to their lives as soldiers. It is of no use for them on the front line.*

2. What do the soldiers discover about their purpose in life?

*As the soldiers speculate on what life will be like after the war, they begin to realize that many of them no longer have any identity outside the war. They notice that their identity has become so closely associated with the war that they are unable to even envision a life outside of the military. As Albert notes, "the war has ruined [them] for everything."*

3. How has the soldiers' relationship with Himmelstoss changed when he finally appears on the front line?

*During training, Himmelstoss was a brutal authority. He has, however, no experience on the battlefield. Consequently, the soldiers no longer respect him. They realize that his authority relied on the safety of the training camp. On the front line, he can no longer bully the soldiers into obedience.*

4. Why does Paul claim that he "loves" Kat? What does his claim contribute to the theme of comradeship?

*During the war, Paul and his fellow soldiers have grown close. Paul's closest friend, however, is the company leader Kat. Kat is not only a leader and a mentor, but also a friend and confidante. Hence, Paul describes their relationship as a "more complete communion. . . than even lovers have." When Paul further claims that he "loves" Kat, he indicates just how important the bond between soldiers is for each individual soldier's survival. Their shared experience allows them to understand and support one another. They do not have to explain themselves to each other.*

## Chapter Six

1. How do the chapter's opening lines convey the continuous presence of death?

*On their way to the front line, Paul and his fellow soldiers pass an old schoolhouse. On the side of the schoolhouse, a number of coffins is lined up against the wall. The coffins are brand new. Clearly, the presence of the coffins is a reminder that not all soldiers will return from the battlefield. As Detering says, "They're for us."*

2. How does the metaphor describing the front contribute to the overall meaning of the text?

*In this chapter, the front is likened to a cage in which soldiers "must await fearfully whatever may happen." The metaphor successfully underscores the soldiers' sense of helplessness. They are not in control of their own destinies, and they cannot make decisions for their own lives. Instead, they are caught in a place from which they cannot escape. Locked up in a "cage," they have only hope to sustain them and carry them through. They know that many of them will never leave this cage, but will perish on the battlefield.*

3. According to Paul, what is the soldiers' attitude toward chance?

*The soldiers know that they risk being killed every time they march to the front line. Yet, to avoid losing their minds, they must cling to the hope that chance will save some of them. As Paul states, "every soldier believes in Chance and trusts his luck."*

4. Why do the soldiers consider additional rations of cheese and rum to be an ominous sign?

*The soldiers know that special rations are handed out only when the soldiers get ready to face particular dangers. As Paul states, the “fat red balls [of cheese] have long been a sign of a bad time coming.”*

5. How does this chapter comment on the advances in weapons technology in World War I compared to earlier wars?

*The chapter reveals that many of the weapons used by the soldiers are now outdated. Paul explains that the “bayonet has practically lost its importance,” and it is no longer effective on the battlefield. Gas and other modern weapons have become more prevalent, and the soldiers fighting with outdated weapons are generally at a disadvantage.*

6. How does the simile “like a rotten tree” help reinforce the psychological trauma experienced by the soldiers?

*Paul Bäumer explains that many soldiers are unable to come to terms with the reality of war. He claims that many of his comrades, and particularly the younger recruits, often crumble under the psychological pressure of warfare. The young soldier collapsing “like a rotten tree” is no longer able to withstand the long hours of waiting in the dugout. With the threat of bombardment hanging over the soldiers, many men cannot stand the long waiting and experience psychological collapse in the confined space of the dugout.*

7. To what extent do animal imagery and metaphors help describe how the horror of bombardment on the front line transforms the soldiers?

*Remarque uses animal imagery to describe how the soldiers change into what he calls “murderers” on the front line. He describes the soldiers as “wild beasts” who follow their survival instincts as they move onward and slaughter their enemies. Their human capacity has been forgotten; they are “crouching like cats” to hide from the enemy, and they are filled with the “greed of life.” Like animals, the soldiers use their instincts to survive. They can no longer apply rational thinking to their actions. Blindly, they commit murder in the name of war. As animals, they are able to commit acts that they would abhor as human beings.*

8. How does Paul’s description of memories of home help establish his portrayal of the “Lost Generation”?

*According to Paul, even though memories of home are “always completely calm” and “soundless apparitions” and have a soothing effect on the soldiers, taking them for a moment back to a more innocent and peaceful time, they are always accompanied by an overwhelming sense of melancholy. The soldiers know that the world they left behind as young boys is changed forever. Further, Paul explains that a disconnect exists between the soldiers and their memories: the life they lived in their hometowns is no longer a part of who they are; it no longer represents their identity. Instead, their identity has been marked and taken over by the war. As Paul states, “I believe we are lost.”*

9. How does the simile “they fall like flies” help explain the role the new recruits play on the battlefield?

*According to Paul, the new recruits are poorly equipped to fight on the front line. They have had barely any training, and they do not know what to expect from the war. Hence, the new recruits “fall like flies” soon after they arrive as reinforcements. Paul explains that, though reinforcements are needed, the new recruits cause “almost more trouble than they are worth.” With little experience to prepare them for life on the front line, the new recruits become a burden for the more established soldiers who have to explain to them what the procedures for staying alive are during a bombardment.*

10. How do the soldiers experience the passage of time on the front line?

*The narrator reveals that soldiers quickly lose their sense of time on the front line. They do not know how long they have been in a particular hole, hiding from the enemy or how long the bombardment has been going on. To the soldiers, day and night are one and the same, and they have lost their sense of direction and time.*

## Chapter Seven

1. How does the soldiers' relationship to Himmelstoss change after the bombardment?

*Though some of the soldiers are still unwilling to bond with Himmelstoss or even converse with him, many of the soldiers are more inclined to accept him into their company after seeing him help a wounded soldier. Furthermore, Himmelstoss makes an attempt to be generous and sponsors a meal for the soldiers. When Himmelstoss reveals that he will be taking over as cook, the soldiers quickly resolve to be on friendly terms with him, since they do not want to go hungry.*

2. What role does humor play among the troops?

*After returning from the front, the soldiers spend a few days in the safety of their encampment. There, they often tell jokes, even when they receive the news that a fellow soldier has died. Humor becomes a coping mechanism for the soldiers.*

3. How are the soldiers able to make the French girls interested in them?

*The soldiers are swimming when they spot the three French girls on the shoreline. In order to attract the French girls' attention, they indicate that they can bring food to the women.*

4. How is the evening at the French women's house ironic?

*It was established earlier that the soldiers' uniforms obliterated their identities as individual human beings. The only time the men were fully human was when they were naked. In this instance, they are naked, having swum across the lake, and they feel weak and vulnerable without their uniforms to give them strength and identity.*

5. How does the metaphor of the "veil" help establish Paul's sensations when he returns to his home?

*At first, Paul is excited when he is granted leave. He is looking forward to coming home to his family. On the train, he marvels at the countryside and is reminded of a world without war. However, when Paul finally arrives home and meets his sister and mother, he suddenly feels paralyzed, unable to fully enjoy his reunion with his family. Paul quickly realizes that his entire identity has changed in the war. He no longer is the young man he was before he enlisted. Hence, he observes "a distance, a veil" between himself and the things he used to feel comfortable around, such as his piano and his writings. Paul experiences a disconnect between his former and present self. He is no longer Paul Bäumer the young boy; he has become a part of the war.*

6. What does Paul learn about his father, his German teacher, and the headmaster when he converses with them about the war?

*When Paul is in the company of his German teacher, father, and the headmaster, he suddenly realizes how far removed from the reality of war these men truly are. They believe that they have all the answers and can give advice to Paul, but in reality, they have no idea about what life is really like for the soldiers on the front line. They are "armchair soldiers" who readily share their ideas but refuse to acknowledge that life on the battlefield is far removed from their realm of experiences.*

7. How does Remarque's use of one-word sentences emphasize Paul's alienation during his leave?

*Remarque uses a series of one-word sentences to underline Paul's growing sense of alienation while he is visiting his family while on leave. The sentences merely consisting of the words "dejected" and "nevermore" help emphasize the disconnect between Paul's old world, the world of his youth, and his new identity as a soldier. Moreover, Paul is eerily aware of the fact that, even after the end of the war, returning to his former life and self will be impossible.*

8. How has Kantorek's status changed?

*When Paul visits his old friend Mittelstaedt in the barracks, he learns that the old schoolmaster Kantorek has been ordered to become a Territorial. In his new position, Kantorek has no power, no influence. Long gone are the days when he imbued his students with a blind sense of patriotism and national pride. Mittelstaedt takes the opportunity to tell him that his decision to force the boys to enlist has cost many of them their lives.*

## Chapter Eight

1. Why does Paul suggest that the Russian soldiers should be “threshing, reaping, and apple picking”?

*During his time at the training camp, Paul often observes the Russian captives who are held next door. For the first time, he has the chance to see “the enemy” up close. Paul recognizes that they are not any different from the “peasants in Friesland.” They are working men, just like the German soldiers. Paul believes they should be working their farms rather than fighting a war.*

2. What simile does Paul use to describe the Russian soldiers and what does the simile exemplify?

*Paul states that the Russian soldiers “move like sick storks, like great birds.” He views the Russians also as once alive and healthy but ruined by war.*

## Chapter Nine

1. What quality about the Kaiser does Tjaden most admire?

*Tjaden admires the Kaiser particularly because everybody has to stand straight in front of the Kaiser and obey his orders. Even high-ranking officials and Generals have to show their respect to the Kaiser.*

2. How does the word “country” complicate the notion of going to war?

*Paul and his comrades are pondering the purpose of war. They wonder who decides to declare war and why. Tjaden uses the word “country” to demonstrate how difficult it is for the average soldier to comprehend reasons for going to war. He states, “A country? I don’t follow. A mountain in Germany cannot offend a mountain in France.” Tjaden’s discussion highlights the disconnect between the people of a country and their leader. While the leaders of a nation make decisions about going to war, the citizens of their countries have to bear the load and fight.*

3. In the context of this chapter, how does the phrase “sputtering speck of existence” help reinforce the theme of comradeship?

*During his first patrol since coming back from leave, Paul is fearful and anxious. He hesitates to attack the enemy and hides to protect himself. He questions why he is forced to fight. While waiting in a shell hole, Paul eventually hears the familiar voices of his comrades, and he realizes then that he is not alone: his comrades are his family. Paul states, “I belong to them and they to me.” Reminding himself of the shared bond between the soldiers helps Paul overcome his fears and once again accept his soldier identity.*

4. How does the encounter with Gerard Duval change Paul's perception of the enemy?

*Gerard Duval is the first man Paul has killed with his own hands. As the man lies dying in the shell hole with Paul, Paul begins to regret his attack on him. He has never been face to face with his enemy on the battlefield before, and he now realizes that the French soldier is a man just like him. Paul attempts to ease the man's pain and promises to contact his family after the war. He feels a deep sense of remorse, because he now realizes that the enemy is not an anonymous amalgamation of soldiers but, instead, is comprised of individual men, just like the German army.*

5. What is the significance of Paul's realization, "you were only an idea to me before, an abstraction that lived in my mind and called forth its appropriate response"?

*This is the climactic moment that establishes the theme of the horror of war. "Soldier" and "enemy" are not abstract concepts, they represent actual human beings with lives.*

## Chapter Ten

1. What do Paul and his fellow soldiers consider to be an "idyll" when they are ordered to guard an abandoned village?

*The chance to eat and sleep in peace is considered an "idyll" by the soldiers. Kat prepares a luxury meal of peas, carrots, cauliflower, and roast pig. The soldiers are standing around the roasting pig "as before an altar."*

2. Why does Paul resolve not to allow the doctors to administer chloroform after he is injured on the battlefield?

*Paul has heard terrible stories about soldiers losing their limbs when the doctors administered chloroform to them. He believes that some of the doctors "amputate on the slightest provocation." Since he does not want to lose his injured leg, he resolves not to allow the doctor to give him chloroform.*

3. Why does Paul suddenly pretend to be in excruciating pain on the train to the hospital?

*Paul and Kropp have both been injured. Paul knows that they will transport him to a hospital farther away if his wounds are not severe. However, Paul does not want to be separated from his friend Kropp. Therefore, he pretends to be in terrible pain to ensure that both he and Kropp will be assigned to the closest hospital together.*

4. How does Paul evaluate his treatment by the nuns in the Catholic hospital?

*Paul is pleased to be staying in the Catholic hospital. Once he has lost his initial shyness around the nuns, he finds that they are very skilled and able to treat the soldiers without giving them much pain. Some of them are cheerful, and they are particularly popular among the soldiers.*

5. What theme is reinforced by Paul's observation that the nuns at the hospital treat a soldier "exactly like a civilian"?

*Paul realized long ago that soldiers are expendable and replaceable. The nuns, however, care for the soldiers as individual human being—exactly like civilians.*

6. How has the concept of privacy changed for the soldiers?

*As they show when Lewandowski's wife visits, the soldiers are no longer shy about one another's privacy; they have learned that pleasing one's basic needs is nothing to be ashamed of.*

## Chapter Eleven

1. How is Paul's use the phrase "solidarity of convicts" something of an oxymoron?

*When Paul returns to his company following his hospital stay, he is happy to be reunited with his fellow soldiers. He has come to appreciate the bond that has developed among the soldiers—the "solidarity." The soldiers, are, however confined beyond their will; thus, they are "convicts."*

2. How does Detering's desertion contribute pathos to the novel?

*By now, the reader should be fully able to understand—and agree with—Detering's decision to leave the front and return home. He is, however, a deserter—a crime punishable by death. While Paul and his fellows and the reader sympathize with Detering, Paul admits, "court-martial a hundred miles behind the front-line" does not understand. The discrepancy between what is understandable and what is legal, and the fact that Detering, once apprehended, is never heard from again—presumably executed for his desertion—create pathos for Detering and the other soldiers.*

3. How does Remarque use symbolism in this chapter to foreshadow Paul's death?

*After Müller's death, Paul receives Kemmerich's boots. Early in the novel, Kemmerich's boots have been established as a symbol for the disposability of human life. When the soldier wearing Kemmerich's boots dies, the shoes are passed on to the next soldier. After Kemmerich's death, Müller receives Kemmerich's boots. When the reader learns that Müller has passed away and left his boots to Paul, it becomes obvious that the passing of the boots is a symbolic foreshadowing of Paul's death.*

4. Why does Remarque use the phrase “Summer of 1918” repeatedly throughout the chapter?

*The repetition of the phrase “Summer of 1918” reveals to the reader that this time period is of great significance to the soldier, the war, and the novel. On the one hand, the soldiers know the end of the war is inevitable and near. On the other hand, the summer of 1918 proves to be one of the most brutal and deadly time periods they have yet experienced in the war. Through the use of this phrase, Remarque warns the reader that important events are about to take place: the war will end in the year 1918; Kat and Paul will die.*

5. Why does the narrator use the phrase “all is as usual” when discussing Kat’s death?

*Kat has died, and Paul is devastated to find that he was unable to save his best friend. The use of the phrase “all is as usual” shows how anonymous a soldier’s individual life is when considered within the war at large. It is no unusual occurrence that soldiers die every day in the war. Yet, when Kat dies, Paul is reminded that each soldier represents an individual human being, a friend, who has been lost.*

## Chapter Twelve

1. How does the chapter establish the problems faced by the “Lost Generation”?

*While waiting for the armistice to be realized, Paul ponders the futility of war, particularly the purposelessness of the last two years. Nothing has changed; nothing has been accomplished. Yet thousands of men have died. Paul wonders what will happen to his generation after the war. He believes that his generation will be “superfluous even to ourselves” and will “fall into ruin.” Without having had the chance to establish a clear direction in life and a firm sense of identity before going to war, Paul’s generation will be misunderstood by the men at home as tired and useless. They have grown up in war, and war is all they know. Unlike the older men, they have no lives, no occupations to return to. War shaped them into soldiers before they had the chance to become human beings.*

2. Why does the narrative viewpoint change in the last paragraph of the novel?

*The last paragraph in the novel switches from the first-person viewpoint to the perspective of a third-person narrator. This third-person narrator reveals that Paul Bäumer has died in the war.*

3. What is the significance of the title, as indicated in the last paragraph of the novel?

*On the day of Paul Bäumer’s death, the army report states, “All quiet on the Western Front.” The sobering message reinforces Remarque’s idea that human beings become dehumanized in the war, and that human individuality and identity mean nothing to the leaders and governments initiating a war. Soldiers are replaceable, and the loss of one soldier is no news on the battlefield.*

# All Quiet on the Western Front

## Chapter One

1. What is ironic about the additional rations made available to the soldiers at the start of chapter one?

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2. How does the use of the latrines illustrate that definitions of privacy have changed for the soldiers who are well-established with their companies?

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3. According to the narrator, which character provided the motivation for the young men to enlist in the army?

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4. What does the fact that all boys volunteered reveal about the theme of comradeship?

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5. In what ways does the chapter criticize the influence of authority figures?

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6. How do Kemmerich's boots function as a symbol?

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7. What is ironic about Paul Bäumer's statement "we are old folk"?

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## Chapter Two

1. In what ways does the war affect the identities of older soldiers differently from younger soldiers?  
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2. What does training teach the young soldiers about authority?  
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3. How does the phrase “circus ponies” help establish the role of the soldiers and relate to the theme of national pride?  
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4. How does the chapter characterize Corporal Himmelstoss?  
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5. What theme is described by the term “*esprit de corps*”?  
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6. In what ways does the experience of being naked call into question the identity of the soldiers and at the same time underscore the powerful burden of wearing a uniform?  
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7. How does Kemmerich’s death affect Paul Bäumer’s outlook on the purpose of war?  
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### Chapter Three

1. How does the euphemism “vacancies” in the first line of the chapter underscore the expendability of the individual in war?

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2. In what ways does Kropp’s idea of war as a “popular festival” help establish Remarque’s criticism?

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3. How does a uniform impact the character of a man like Himmelstoss?

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4. According to Kat, what is the basic principle of war?

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5. Why does Remarque uses the simile “like a signalmast” to describe the way Haie Westhus raises his arm to strike Himmelstoss?

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### Chapter Four

1. How does Paul Bäumer's metaphor help describe the terror of war?

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2. How does the front transform the soldiers?

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3. What simile is used to describe the bombardment by the French experienced by Paul and his fellow soldiers, and how does the simile help create an image of life on the front line?

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4. Why does Paul allow the crying young recruit to hide under his arm during the bombardment?

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5. Why is Detering particularly affected when he sees the injured horses?

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6. To what extent do descriptions of the gas attack help paint an image of the brutality and war and the vast degree of carnage suffered on all sides?

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7. What effect does the simile “like cold water” produce on the reader?

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8. How is Kat’s desire to shoot the young injured soldier ironic? What does it echo?

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**Chapter Five**

1. What is the soldiers' attitude toward the knowledge they learned in school?

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2. What do the soldiers discover about their purpose in life?

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3. How has the soldiers' relationship with Himmelstoss changed when he finally appears on the front line?

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4. Why does Paul claim that he "loves" Kat? What does his claim contribute to the theme of comradeship?

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### Chapter Six

1. How do the chapter's opening lines convey the continuous presence of death?

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2. How does the metaphor describing the front contribute to the overall meaning of the text?

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3. According to Paul, what is the soldiers' attitude toward chance?

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4. Why do the soldiers consider additional rations of cheese and rum to be an ominous sign?

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5. How does this chapter comment on the advances in weapons technology in World War I compared to earlier wars?

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6. How does the simile “like a rotten tree” help reinforce the psychological trauma experienced by the soldiers?

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7. To what extent do animal imagery and metaphors help describe how the horror of bombardment on the front line transforms the soldiers?

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8. How does Paul’s description of memories of home help establish his portrayal of the “Lost Generation”?

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9. How does the simile “they fall like flies” help explain the role the new recruits play on the battlefield?

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10. How do the soldiers experience the passage of time on the front line?

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**Chapter Seven**

1. How does the soldiers' relationship to Himmelstoss change after the bombardment?

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2. What role does humor play among the troops?

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3. How are the soldiers able to make the French girls interested in them?

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4. How is the evening at the French women's house ironic?

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5. How does the metaphor of the “veil” help establish Paul’s sensations when he returns to his home?

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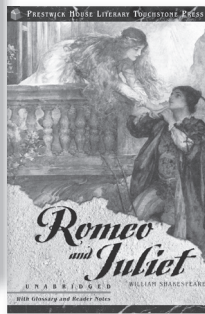
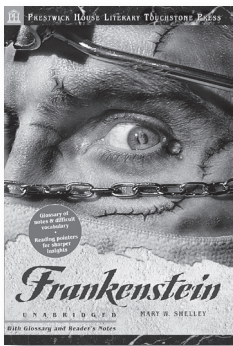
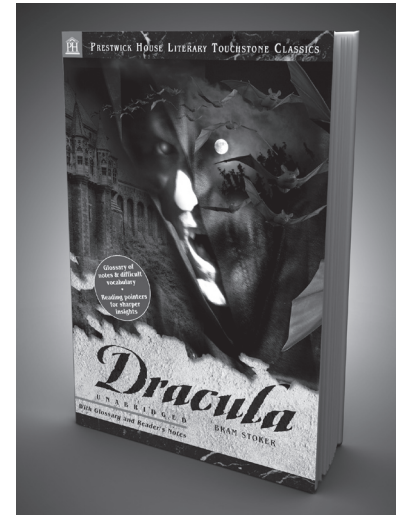
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