

Grade 10: History

Course: Modern European History Honors
Modern European History

All Quiet on the Western Front by Erich Maria Remarque

Before reading: Read a synopsis of World War I. Concentrate on the participation of the Germans in that conflict. Be particularly attentive to the fighting along the “Western Front” (Northern France and Belgium).

Questions to consider when reading:

1. Who are Paul’s high school friends? What are their distinguishing characteristics?
2. What motivates them to volunteer for the German army?
3. Who are Kantorek and Himmelstoss and what role do they play in the novel?
4. Why were boots so important to the characters in the novel?
5. What are the specific things a soldier needs in order to be content, according to Paul?
6. Be aware of the geographic LOCATIONS in which Paul and his unit have their experiences -- in battle; on leave; and at the times when they are performing other duties and activities.
7. What purpose does the appearance of Kaiser Wilhelm (emperor of Germany) serve in the novel?
8. According to Paul and his friends, why do the Germans lose the war?
9. After a few years in fierce combat, Paul and other members of his unit discuss why the war in which they are enmeshed is being fought. “Why are we in this war”, they ask. What are their conclusions? Are these different than their views when they joined up (as in earlier question)? According to Remarque, what’s the glory of war?
10. How does Remarque show the dehumanization of people affected by the conflict?