

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher: Teri Shoemaker
School: Olentangy High School
Book Title: *All Quiet on the Western Front*
Genre: Historical Fiction
Author: Erich Maria Remarque
Publisher: Ballantine Books: New York

Book Summary and Summary Citation: (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

1. (from Common Sense Media) NOTE: This review is written for the movie, not the novel

<https://www.common Sense Media.org/movie-reviews/all-quiet-on-the-western-front>

It's World War I in Germany, and soldiers are marching through the streets, rallying young students to join the war effort. In one classroom a patriotic professor encourages his class of young men to enlist, using every military recruitment tactic in the book. In a rush of excitement, the entire class joins up. Basic training is tough, but the young men are still enthusiastic about heading to the front. Once they hit real action, however, the reality of war sets in. The men cry, wet their pants, shriek in terror, and watch their comrades die pointless deaths. As the original group shrinks, due to death and serious injury, the morale of the group sinks to horrible lows. Poor morale combined with a lack of food, severe homesickness, and the realization that even a visit back home doesn't comfort the soul drags the main character -- Paul -- into depression. But his friendship with an older soldier who has become a mentor and father figure seems like it will save him. In the end, the darkness of war wins out.

2.

<https://www.amazon.com/All-Quiet-Western-Front-Novel/dp/0449213943>

(from back cover)

"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..."

This is the testament of Paul Baumer, who enlists with his classmates in the German army of World War I. These young men become enthusiastic soldiers, but their world of duty, culture, and progress breaks into pieces under the first bombardment in the trenches.

Through years of vivid horror, Paul holds fast to a single vow: to fight against the hatred that meaninglessly pits young men of the same generation but different uniforms against one another---if only he can come out of the war alive.

Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum blueprints and/or State standards.

- a. Specifically correlates with the topic being taught in World History at the time we read the novel (W.W. I)
- b. Offers excellent examples of literary elements students need to know:
 - o simile
 - o metaphor
 - o syntax
 - o apostrophe
 - o anaphora
 - o juxtaposition
 - o olfactory, visual, auditory, tactile, and gustatory imagery
 - o others
- c. Offers excellent opportunities for students to effectively annotate a text
- d. Exposes students to unfamiliar vocabulary
- e. Uses art and poetry that support the topic to evaluate how art, poetry, and prose communicate this topic to students
- f. Allows small groups of students to work together on creating posters and giving presentations over specific topics dealing with W.W. I
- g. Guides students through nuances of character development
- h. Allows students narrative writing opportunities as they study character development

Specific District and Common Core Standards include (please include a link to the ELA Standards document and list the specific standards):

<https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/English-Language-Art/English-Language-Arts-Standards/ELA-Learning-Standards-2017-Section-508.pdf.aspx>

- RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RL.9-10.2 Analyze literary text development. a. Determine a theme of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details. b. Provide an objective summary of the text that includes the theme and relevant story elements.

- **RL.9-10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.**
- **RL.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning, mood, and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place or an emotion; how it sets a formal or informal tone).**
- **RL.9-10.10 By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9–10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range, building background knowledge and activating prior knowledge in order to make personal, historical, and cultural connections that deepen understanding of complex text.**
- **W.9-10.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.**
 - a. Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
 - b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
 - c. Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.
 - d. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
 - e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.
- **SL.9-10.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.**
- **SL.9-10.5 Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.**
- **SL.9-10.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.**

Include two professional reviews of this title: (links to the reviews are fine; Common Sense Media should be used, if available)

1.

(from back cover)

<https://www.amazon.com/All-Quiet-Western-Front-Novel/dp/0449213943>

“The world has a great writer in Erich Maria Remarque. He is a craftsman of unquestionably first rank, a man who can bend language to his will. Whether he writes of men or of inanimate nature, his touch is sensitive, firm, and sure.” (*The New York Times Book Review*)

Considered by many the greatest war novel of all time, *All Quiet on the Western Front* is Erich Maria Remarque’s masterpiece of the German experience during World War I.

2.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/from-the-archive-blog/2019/mar/06/all-quiet-on-the-western-front-published-remarque-1929>

Not until this year, in sudden and sombre efflorescence, has the written word communicated the direct, immediate experience of the war itself. *All Quiet on the Western Front* is surely the greatest of all war books. The author, Erich Maria Remarque, is otherwise quite unknown. Perhaps it was necessary for someone innocent of fine writing of style, of the “mot juste” to convey this immediacy of experience in trenches, dug-outs, No Man’s Land, and field hospitals. Words are made to serve truth, not truth words. And yet the book is not formless, but plastic and architectural. What makes it all the more impressive is the simplicity, and the strength of character that are its foundation. There is horror and suffering greater than Poe or Dostoevsky felt or imagined. Yet there is no morbidity, no sentiment, no hysteria.

Perhaps no one who went through the war came out of it completely sane, but Remarque lost very little of his sanity and can look back into that inferno with unevasive eyes. And yet, for all the gloom and tragic horror, there is humour, good fellowship, and delicious vengeance on brutal superiors in his book. But beneath it all is the sense of ultimate pity and the complete, incurable pessimism of those who have either been proletarians or common soldiers.

What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements? (alternates should be previously reviewed texts or a new text needs a new review form)

A World Undone: The Story of the Great War, 1914 to 1918 by G.J. Meyer

For Whom the Bell Tolls by Ernest Hemingway

Document any potentially controversial content (clear, descriptive, accurate, and examples of a page number or two):

<https://www.common sense media.org/movie-reviews/all-quiet-on-the-western-front>

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

Parents need to know that this anti-war epic from the 1930s digs into the physical, psychological, and emotional damage that war wreaks on soldiers in great detail. Soldiers are wounded and die, sometimes in agony, sometimes in a bloody mess, and sometimes slow and painfully. The war scenes are graphic, but don't compare in gruesomeness to more modern fare, and there's something about watching the black-and-white movie with old-fashioned characters that lessens the impact of the violence. That said, it's still intense and not for kids, though older teens can probably handle it. The soldiers occasionally talk about women and allude to sex. In one scene, several soldiers bring food to French women in exchange for (offscreen) intimacy.

Positive Messages (4 stars)

The overwhelming message is that war for war's sake is wrong. It damages the lives of young men beyond what most people can understand. The film shows how propaganda and patriotism are used to romanticize war and argues for a more realistic understanding of fighting. The film depicts post-traumatic stress disorder way before there was a name for it, and shows men crying, frightened, and under enormous stress, which is unusual for a movie of this time.

Positive Role Models (3 stars)

Almost all the men are depicted as innocents with good intentions who find themselves in horrible situations. The main characters look after their friends, respect their superiors (except for one particularly bad one, who they hijack and spank when he's drunk).

Violence (3 stars)

Brutal war violence throughout -- and that's the point. In one scene a soldier has stabbed an enemy soldier and then regrets the act as the man slowly dies lying in a trench next to him. He begs forgiveness, promising to take care of the man's family, all while sobbing with guilt, fear, and grief.

Sex (2 stars)

Occasionally the soldiers (all male) discuss women longingly -- in one scene several men look at a poster of a woman and talk about her body and how they'd like to date her. In another scene, several men meet a few French woman and exchange food for offscreen sex.

Language (1 star)

Occasional "hell" and "damn." Lots of yelling at others, sometimes insultingly -- like calling another soldier a "yellow rat."

Drinking, drugs, and Smoking (2 stars)

Several scenes with drinking, sometimes to severe drunkenness. These scenes almost always serve to illustrate the darkness of the war, and rarely look enjoyable. Occasional smoking of pipes, cigars, and cigarettes.

Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)

Gifted/Accelerated Regular At-Risk

GRADE LEVEL(S): (indicate the grade band or the grade level):

9th-10th grade band, specifically used in Honors Interdisciplinary English 9

Reading Level of this Title (lexile level)

830 L

Suggested Professional Literacy Review Sources:

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults

Signatures:

Teacher: Teri Shoemaker

Date: January, 2022

Department Head: Erin Centa

Date: 1/7/22

Building Administrator: [Signature]

Date: 1/25/22

Curriculum Supervisor: [Signature]

Date: 1/28/22

