

The Quiet American

Task 1. Read the text and answer the questions

The Quiet American is an anti-war novel by Graham Greene that was published in 1955 in the United Kingdom and in 1956 in the United States. Greene drew upon his own experiences in Indochina as a war correspondent for *The Times* and *Le Figaro* in the early 1950s. While he used his observations as a basis for the novel, Greene claimed several times that *The Quiet American* was not intended to reveal or prove any historical truths. He makes it clear that the characters are imaginary and not based on anyone specific he had met in Vietnam.

Greene's novel *The Quiet American* brought forward the most important problem in the progressive literature of modern life – the problem of choice.

1. What kind of a novel is *The Quiet American*?
2. When and where did it appear?
3. What experience did Green have to write the novel?
4. What problem is raised in the novel?

Task 2. Read the text and mark True/False statements.

The plot of the novel is centered round a murder. It is not a detective novel, for the theme is profoundly political. The action of the novel is set in Vietnam in the 1950s, when the country was a French colony. The “quiet” American Pyle is employed in the American Economic Aid Mission, but his real duty is to arrange various acts of sabotage and provocation. His antagonist is Fowler, an English newspaper correspondent. Fowler is not young, he is unhappy in private life, disillusioned and tired. His creed is not to get involved in anything. Fowler reports only what he sees, trying to be indifferent to everything. But sooner or later one has to make a choice and Fowler does so. He begins to help the people of Vietnam in their struggle against the French troops. In showing the evolution of Fowler Greene truthfully describes the development of an average Englishman who begins to understand political injustice.

1. The leading line of the novel is detective.
2. Vietnam was an American colony in the 1950s.
3. Pyle is a newspaper correspondent.
4. Fowler motto is not to be involved in anything.
5. Green shows political injustice through Fowler's understanding.

Task 3. Read the text and correct 7 mistakes.

The *Quiet American* is a very short novel, but it feels longer. Not because it's boring but just the opposite. It sounds so many depths: each of the three lead characters, Fowler's allies and sources, the military forces, the complex social scene - daily life for the Vietnamese and the sudden violence that rends it. All explicated seamlessly in Greene's seemingly casual, though still very British style.

The Quiet American has been published at a time in American history when domestic criticism of the Vietnam War had not yet become popular opinion - there was only about 300 Americans in Vietnam in 1952. By the 1960s, however, every Western reporter had a copy of *The Quiet American* and carried it around while writing about the region.

Today, the *Quiet American* is simply considered a great work of literature. In 2007, an article in TIME magazine detailed a journey that Greene fans take to Saigon to follow the paths of the characters in *The Quiet American*. The Vietnamese governments and local businesses have taken advantage of Greene-fueled tourism, and street vendors on the Rue Catinat, the setting of Fowler's flat in the novel, sell hundreds of copies of *The Quiet American* every week. *The Quiet American* has also been adapted into two films, once in 1958 and once in 2002.