

All Quiet on the Western Front - Group Work #1 – Chapter 1



One way to think of group work is as a kind of in-class essay: something you will frequently encounter next year (or the year after) in college. The two most important measures of its success are 1) How well you can **think and articulate answers in a timed environment.** 2) How well you can **stay focused for the entire period.**



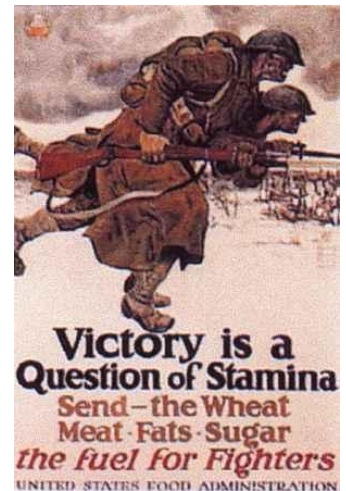
1. What are a soldier's necessities? What are those things, times, enjoyments, which are most necessary for their well-being and happiness (be specific, and name at least 3)? Are they the same things that would occur as necessities to those not fighting a war? Why/why not? Which of these is the most shocking (embarrassing) to the nonsoldier? Do you remember in *Candide* the differences between what the Europeans (gold) thought was important versus those that lived in El Dorado? How does that fit in with this question? Be specific.

1b. There is a profound and significant connection between this (the idea you covered in question 1) and one of the central ideas of *The History of Love*. I want you to find this critical connection – check it out with other groups if you need to (in fact, I suggest that you do). Be specific – I will tell you that it is not a “stretch.”

1. Why do the soldiers believe that they should be given all the food and rations though it was originally intended for many more men (use at least one direct quote in your answer here)? How is the mind-set (or reality) of Ginger (the cook) different than the men?

3. Put questions 1 & 2 together for your consideration when answering this question: Are the rules of the front the same as the rules of home: how does how Ginger deals with bringing (or not bringing) the food up the front? How does Paul say the people back home would react to seeing (hearing) them now – explain with specifics. Do these two sets of rules apply to other works we've read – (*History of Love*, *Candide*, *House on Mango Street*)?

4. Who is Kantorek? Is he, in any way, more evil or guilty of the soldiers' deaths and torment than the actual enemy who wield the guns? Explain and include 2 direct quotes in your answer. Briefly discuss whether any of your group members have been similarly let down or grossly misled by an adult or authority figure (just briefly write down the most applicable of these examples – no names please: “I remember when Mr. Scotese promised to dance with me at prom...”). Again, look at your answers to the first 3 questions – how does Kantorek fit in with this *home vs. front* equation. Be specific.



5. Is Müller wrong for wanting (if not asking for) Franz's boots? How does this fit in with the rules of decorum, tact, and manners apply to the soldiers that apply to the rest of us (yes, go look at your answers to your earlier questions)?

6. Link, specifically, Ben from *The Graduate* with the disillusionment of the men as well as their relationship to the older generation – be specific (use at least 2 quotes – hint: there's a doozy on page 13).

As you continue reading, and if you have time look back – how did Voltaire's description of war mesh with what you are reading now. Try to think of the specifics of those first few chapters of *Candide* and the *harmony of war*.

You will be doing an illuminated text for this book – as you read start thinking and marking on what you want to do it on.