

IB 20th Century

*All Quiet on the Western Front*

Binder Write

### Background

In 1929 Erich Maria Remarque wrote the book on which the movie *All Quiet on the Western Front* is based on. He had been drafted by the Germans in 1916 at the age of 18. Fighting in Flanders, on the Western Front, laying barbed wire and building bunkers, he was wounded while attempting to retrieve another soldier during battle. He spent the remainder of the war in the hospital. The book was both well received and controversial. In 1933 the Nazis burned and banned the book (and the American made Lewis Milestone movie) calling it a “betrayal of the soldiers of the First World War.” In 1938 the Nazi government revoked Remarque’s citizenship and the author moved from Switzerland to the United States.

### Major Characters

Paul Baumer	German soldier, protagonist
Albert Kropp	Paul’s friend, wounded must have an amputation
Franz Kemmerich	Paul’s best friend, shot in the leg, requires amputation
Müller	Paul’s friend very interested in education, inherits Kemmerich’s boots
Stanislaus Katczinsky	(Kat) - older soldier and Paul’s mentor
Kantorek	schoolmaster, strong supporter of war
Himmelstoss	postman turned corporal
Gérard Duval	French soldier whom Paul encounters in No Man’s Land

### Viewing Questions

The questions below will form the basis for our class discussion. Please consider them as you watch and take notes below each question. Please feel free to add your own questions and be prepared to share your personal responses to the film as well.

1. Compare and evaluate the usefulness of *All Quiet* as a primary historical source and as a fictional work of art/literature.
2. Examine the role of heroism in the film. Are there any heroes? Who are they and what makes them heroic? Who are the enemies?
3. Describe the role of women in the film.
4. How are sound and the framing of shots used in ways that might have been innovative at the time? Why does or doesn’t this film continue to be powerful today?
5. In what ways and why is Paul betrayed by the adults in his life? In what other ways is he alienated? How does this relate to Kelly’s description of the “classic anti-war” movie?
6. What is the irony of Kat’s and Paul’s situation at the end of the film? How does this relate to Kelly’s description of the “classic anti-war” movie?