

All quiet on the
western front irony



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

World War I, countless soldiers naively enlisted into the army, unaware of the harsh realities that lied before them. In the novel, All Quiet on the Western Front, Erich Maria Remarque tells the story of Paul Bäumer, a German soldier stationed in northeastern France.

This was a time period when war was unjustly glorified and only the soldiers understood the battles with their conscience that would follow their deployment. When they first entered the war, Paul and his friends were excited and proud to be German soldiers.

However, as the war continued, they realized that honor and pride in killing other men was only an illusion. Upon his arrival to training camp, Paul meets a few Russian prisoners that are just on the other side of the bordering fence. It becomes apparent that he has more in common with the 'enemy' than he does with his superiors.

His conscience begins to question the ethics of his orders to kill other men whom he is so much alike. Soon after, Paul and his friends cannot imagine life without war. They fear the end of it as much as they fear the war itself because once the war ends nothing will be left of them.

Eventually the war does end, and Paul dies.

On the day of Paul's death, it was all quiet on the western front. And "his face had an expression of calm, as though almost glad the end had come." (Remarque, 296). He was able to survive the bombs, toxic gas, and gunfire, but in a cruel twist of irony, he passes away during the first moments of peace they had seen in years.

Through the eyes of a soldier, society's view of war as the Journey to becoming a hero is shattered. As seen by Paul Beamer, violent conflict creates tension between the conscience and orders from superiors, as one cannot be chosen without defying the other.