All Quiet on the Western Front (German: Im Westen nichts Neues) is a novel by Erich Maria Remarque, a German veteran of World War I. The book describes the German soldiers' extreme physical and mental stress during the war, and the detachment from civilian life felt by many of these soldiers upon returning home from the front. From November 10 to December 9, 1928, All Quiet on the Western Front was published in serial form in Vossische Zeitung magazine. It was released in book form the following year - 1929 - to smashing success, selling a million and a half copies that same year. Although publishers had worried that interest in the Great War had waned more than 10 years after the armistice, Remarque's realistic depiction of trench warfare from the perspective of young soldiers struck a chord with the war's survivors—soldiers and civilians alike—and provoked strong reactions, both positive and negative, around the world.

With All Quiet on the Western Front, Remarque emerged as an eloquent spokesperson for a generation that had been, in his own words, "destroyed by war, even though it might have escaped its shells." Remarque's harshest critics, in turn, were his countrymen, many of whom felt the book denigrated the German war effort, and that Remarque had exaggerated the horrors of war in order to further his pacifist agenda. Not surprisingly, the strongest voices against Remarque came from the emerging National Socialist (Nazi) Party, an ultranationalist group in Germany led by the future Fuhrer, Adolf Hitler. In 1933, when the Nazis rose to power, All Quiet on the Western Front became one of the first "degenerate" books to be publicly burnt.

Criticisms suggest that perhaps experiences of the war and the personal reactions of individual soldiers to their experiences may be more diverse than Remarque portrays them; however, it is beyond question that Remarque gives voice to a side of the war and its experience that was overlooked or suppressed at the time. In contrast, All Quiet on the Western Front was trumpeted by pacifists as an anti-war book. Remarque makes a point in
the opening statement that the novel does not advocate any political position, but is merely an attempt to describe the experiences of the soldier.

In 1930, the book was adapted as an Oscar-winning film of the same name, directed by Lewis Milestone. In 1979 the novel was adapted for a new US TV 150 minute version on film directed by Delbert Mann. After being edited by 20 minutes, the resulting 129 minute version is the one subsequently released to VHS video and DVD worldwide. The 2009 UK Blue-ray release features the original, unedited version.

The 1929 English translation by Arthur Wesley Wheen gives the title as *All Quiet on the Western Front*. The literal translation of "Im Westen nichts Neues" is "Nothing New in the West," with "West" being the Western Front; the phrase refers to the content of an official communiqué at the end of the novel. Brian Murdoch's 1993 translation would render the phrase as "there was nothing new to report on the Western Front" within the narrative. Explaining his retention of the original book-title, he says: Although it does not match the German exactly, Wheen's title has justly become part of the English language and is retained here with gratitude. The phrase "all quiet on the Western Front" has become a colloquial expression meaning stagnation, or lack of visible change, in any context.
About the author:

Erich Maria Remarque was born on 22 June 1898 into a working class family in Germany. During World War 1, Remarque was conscripted into the army at the age of 18. On 12 June 1917, he was transferred to the Western Front. On 31 July of the same year he was wounded by shrapnel in the left leg, right arm and neck, and was repatriated to an army hospital in Germany where he spent the rest of the war. After the war he continued his teacher training until 1920 when he applied for leave of absence from teaching, bringing this period of his life to an end. Erich worked at a number of different jobs, including librarian, businessman, teacher, journalist and editor. At the age of 16, Remarque had made his first attempts at writing; this included essays, poems, and the beginnings of a novel that was finished later and published in 1920 as The Dream Room (Die Traumbude). When he published All Quiet on the Western Front, Remarque changed his middle name in memory of his mother and reverted to the earlier spelling of the family name to dissociate himself from his novel Die Traumbude. The original family name, Remarque, had been changed to Remark by his grandfather in the 19th century. His best known work, All Quiet on the Western Front (Im Westen nichts Neues), was written in a few months in 1927, but Remarque was not immediately able to find a publisher. The novel, published in 1929, described the experiences of German soldiers during World War I. A number of similar works followed; in simple, emotive language they described wartime and the postwar years. In 1931, after finishing The Road Back (Der Weg zurück), Remarque bought a villa in Porto Ronco, Switzerland. His next novel, Three Comrades (Drei Kameraden), spans the years of the Weimar Republic, from the hyperinflation of 1923 to the end of the decade. Remarque's fourth novel, Flotsam (in German titled Liebe deinen Nächsten, or Love Thy Neighbour), first appeared in a serial version in English translation in Collier's magazine in 1939, and Remarque spent another year revising the text for its book publication in 1941, both in English and German. His next novel, Arch of Triumph, first published in 1945 in English, and the next year in German as Arc de Triomphe, was another instant best-seller and reached worldwide sales of nearly five million.

On 10 May 1933, the German government, on the initiative of the Nazi propaganda minister, Joseph Goebbels, banned and publicly burned Remarque's works. Remarque
finally left Germany to live at his villa in Switzerland. The Nazis continued to decry his writings and claimed that he was a descendant of French Jews. The Nazis also claimed, falsely, that Remarque had not seen active service during World War I. In 1938, Remarque's German citizenship was revoked and then in 1939 after he and his ex-wife were remarried to prevent her repatriation to Germany, they left Porto Ronco, Switzerland for the United States of America. They became naturalized citizens of the United States in 1947. In 1943, the government arrested his sister, Elfriede Scholz, who had stayed behind in Germany with her husband and two children. After a short trial in the "Volksgerichtshof" (Hitler's extra-constitutional "People's Court"), she was found guilty of "undermining morale" for stating that she considered the war lost. Court President Roland Freisler declared, "Ihr Bruder ist uns leider entwischt—Sie aber werden uns nicht entwischen" ("Your brother is unfortunately beyond our reach—you, however, will not escape us"). Scholz was beheaded on 16 December 1943. In 1948, Remarque returned to Switzerland, where he spent the rest of his life. Remarque died in 1970.