



11th Grade Summer Assignment
The Things They Carried
by Tim O'Brien
Due: August 11, 2023 by 11:59 PM

Welcome to the 11th Grade! For your summer assignment, you will read *The Things They Carried*, Tim O'Brien's acclaimed novel about the Vietnam War.

“*The Things They Carried* is a ground-breaking meditation on war, memory, imagination, and the redemptive power of storytelling. *The Things They Carried* depicts the men of Alpha Company: Jimmy Cross, Henry Dobbins, Rat Kiley, Mitchell Sanders, Norman Bowker, Kiowa, and the character Tim O'Brien, who has survived his tour in Vietnam to become a father and writer at the age of forty-three. It has become required reading for any American and continues to challenge readers in their perceptions of fact and fiction, war and peace, courage and fear and longing.”

-Adapted from Amazon.com

General, Yet Important Information

1. Because we will be using this novel in our first unit, we suggest that you buy your own copy so that you can annotate it during the summer and during the workshop. A pdf will also be emailed to you.
2. Be prepared for a **closed book reading exam during the first week of school!** The reading exam will consist of multiple choice questions.
3. In our first unit, you will be writing a literary analysis essay. To do this work, it is imperative to break down the different literary components and conduct a close reading of the required text, *The Things They Carried*. The goal of the summer assignment is ***not*** to write a cohesive essay, but rather to begin the ***pre-writing process*** in preparation for this essay. Please keep the following in mind:
 - a. Make sure to be thoughtful about which character and symbol you select because you can use these later on in your literary analysis essay.
 - b. This assignment will consist of five separate paragraphs that will be approximately 2-3 pages. Again, not an essay!

The Assignment:

Read all of the following directions carefully and completely **PRIOR** to reading the text so you know what you are looking for when you read the novel.

Part 1:

Characterization is a literary device that is used in literature to highlight and explain the details of a character. Choose a character that you find interesting and/or that evokes a strong emotion in you, either positively or negatively. Write a paragraph for each topic below and integrate 2 quotes to support your statements.

- a. Physical Description and/or Personality Traits (1 paragraph total)
- b. Actions (1 paragraph total)

Part 2:

Symbolism is another literary device that is used in literature to add or reveal meaning that goes beyond the literal representation. Literary symbols can be an object, action, or event. Choose a symbol that is associated with the selected character from the previous section. Write a paragraph for each topic below and integrate 2 quotes to support your statements.

- a. How does the symbol function in the novel? (1 paragraph total)
- b. What might the symbol reveal about the character? (1 paragraph total)
- c. What larger message (author's commentary) might the author be trying to convey through the symbol? (1 paragraph total)

How to Format your Paper:

- Make sure you use a proper heading on the left-hand side of the paper. See example below:



- Your paper should be double-spaced, written in 12 pt. Times New Roman or Arial font.

- Your response to each question should be labeled.
- Skip a space between each response.

Submission Directions:

1. You will submit your paragraphs to www.turnitin.com, which will scan your work for plagiarism and the use of AI programs, so BE CAREFUL and HONEST! **The assignment must be submitted to turnitin.com by August 11, 2023 at 11:59 pm.**

Class ID: 39076168

Enrollment Key/Password: corebaby

2. You may email Mr. Saavedra (tssaavedra@corebaby.org) or Ms. Del Pino (mdelpino@corebaby.org) with any questions and they will respond when they are available.

We look forward to having you next year! Have a great summer!

CHARACTERS

Tim O'Brien- the narrator

Lieutenant Jimmy Cross- responsible for Alpha Company; loves Martha

Mitchell Sanders- one of the soldiers; decent and kind

Kiowa- Tim's closest friend in Vietnam

Norman Bowker- a soldier whose pain from the war is shown after the war (Speaking of Courage)

Henry Dobbins- one of the soldiers; decent and kind

Rat Kiley- the medic; he tells the story of Mary Anne (Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong)

Curt Lemon- the soldier who dies playing with a grenade

Ted Lavender- another soldier who dies

Lee Strunk- a soldier whose nose is broken by Dave Jensen

Dave Jensen- a soldier who feels guilty for breaking Strunk's nose

Azar- a soldier who is cruel and inhumane

Bobby Jorgenson- the medic who replaces Rat Kiley

Elroy Berdahl- the owner of the Tip Top Lodge (On the Rainy River)

Kathleen- O'Brien's daughter- goes with him back to Vietnam (Field Trip)

Mary Anne- Mark Fossie's high school girlfriend (Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong)

Mark Fossie- the medic in Rat Kiley's story; arranges for Mary Anne to come to Vietnam (Sweetheart...)

Linda- O'Brien's first childhood girlfriend

Glossary of Military Terms Used in the Story

AO: Area of operation

PFC: Private First Class

RTO: Radio and Telephone Operator

PRC-25: Pronounced “prick 25”

M & Ms: Medical Supplies and Morphine

Psy Ops: Psychological Warfare Operations

R & R: Rest and Relaxation

SOP: Standard Operation Procedure

US KIA: United States Killed in Action

USO: United Service Organization (volunteer entertainment and morale)

VC: Vietcong