

Summer Reading

for students entering AP English

1. Obtain a copy of *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien. Read the novel sometime during the second half of the summer.
2. As you read, keep a journal in which you make observations about the characters, conflicts and symbols present in each of the stories, as well as the author's use of literary techniques with which you are familiar. Bring this journal with you to the first day of class.
3. Then, compose a thesis-based essay in which you examine the meaning of truth in storytelling as O'Brien presents it in *The Things They Carried*. Use the stories from the collection, and their accompanying reflections, to illustrate your thesis.

Do not limit your focus to war stories alone, as this is as much a book about writing in any form as it is a book about Vietnam. Support from the novel should not consist only of the author's remarks about craft. Consider also how the invented aspects of the stories, in the form of literary techniques, work to accomplish the writer's purpose.

4. The maximum length for this essay is three typed pages, double-spaced. Be sure to include a title that reflects the focus of your thesis. Cite quotations and other supporting information using the latest MLA guidelines, which can be found at Purdue's Online Writing Lab: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>
5. To receive credit for this required assignment, it must be submitted to your teacher on the first day of class. If you have any questions, you may contact Mr. Osora at dosora@hvrhs.org

Your essay should examine its topic clearly, directly and fully. Approach the text analytically and illustrate your ideas with numerous textual references, including clearly identified literary techniques and direct quotations from the novel. Use a mature style of writing which exhibits full command of organization, syntax and diction. Make your points thoroughly, without summarizing plot, and demonstrate your understanding of the text on both literal and conceptual levels.