

**AP Language and Composition 2019-2020
Summer Reading Letter and Assignment**

Dear Parents and/or Guardians,

Welcome to AP English III! I am so excited to begin working towards enhancing your child's success! AP Language and Composition is considered a "college-level" course. Consequently, some of the books on the district-approved reading list contain potentially controversial subject matter. This subject matter may include sexual content/references, profanity, violence, and racist viewpoints. We believe the books on the list are valuable and appropriate. It is important to remember that as your students read difficult, thought-provoking literature they are enhancing their critical reading skills. The themes and controversies of the texts are used to foster a dialogue and discussion in the classroom. Each text is chosen for a specific reason; therefore, the books serve to slowly guide students toward becoming more informed and active citizens that are equipped with the ability to communicate about a myriad of topics in a variety of forms effectively.

The novel selected for this summer is entitled *The Things They Carried*. It is a non-traditional fictional tale that is considered to be one of the best books about the Vietnam War. Written by veteran Tim O'Brien, this story focuses on the difficult issues of war. Other novels that will be read this year that may be deemed controversial include the following: *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margret Atwood, *The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, and *The Kite Runner* by Khalid Hosseini.

Please know that regardless of the book's topics, themes, and context, we professionally explore the issues with teen readers cautiously. The attempt to expose students to challenging topics and issues is not intended to force students into a certain mode of thought; moreover, the books are to serve as opportunities for students to think, theorize, question, and explore.

If you feel in any way uncomfortable with your student reading a "potentially controversial" novel, please ask him / her to meet with us as soon as possible (before the end of this semester), so that an alternate novel may be offered. If you are interested in knowing more about the novel your student will be expected to read, please e-mail or call us with your concerns and we can discuss the details and issues of the particular book. We look forward to having a great year and watching as your child grows as a reader, writer, and critical thinker!

Sincerely,

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AP Language and Composition 2019-2020 Summer Reading Assignment

DUE DATES:

Part A and C are due the 1st day of school; Part B due 1st Monday of school; Discussion Guide TBA

Since it was first published, *The Things They Carried* has become an unparalleled Vietnam War testament, a classic work of American literature, and a profound study of men at war that illuminates the capacity, and the limits, of the human heart and soul. As this is a war story, be prepared to encounter a few graphic war details and strong battlefield language, and be prepared to ponder deep questions about the nature of truth and story-telling.

- A. As you read the first chapter entitled “The Things They Carried,” create a list of the **most prominent** tangible and intangible items each soldier carries; also note the most significant tangible and intangible items *all* soldiers carry. Consider the items and then draw inferences about each individual as well as the soldiers collectively. It should be organized as follows. The list may be a bit tedious and repetitive - yes, I want you to capture all of it! Consider what items are repeated and why. Consider the way he composes the clauses, phrases, and sentences that list the items that belong to the soldiers. Think about both the tangible and intangible weight of the objects they carry. PLEASE MAKE THE COLUMNS ON NOTEBOOK PAPER AND **HANDWRITE THE LIST**. USE A RULER TO DRAW LINES DOWN THE PAGES. WRITE ON THE FRONT-SIDE ONLY OF NOTEBOOK PAPER AND USE INK (BLUE OR BLACK).

Soldier's Names (You will create a list of all soldiers found in Chapter 1)	Tangible Items	Intangible Items	Inferences based on the items
Jimmy Cross	Letters from Martha, etc.	his love for Martha; etc.	he is sentimental; etc.
All Soldiers			

B. Then, create a story map to document your travels through the work - the map can be a chance for you to combine your own words, O'Brien's text, graphics, doodles, drawings, definitions, cool phrasing, etc. - a way for you to express your understanding of the work and the stories Tim O'Brien tells about the soldiers as you read about the Alpha Company's war experiences. Be creative and try to use this to reveal the conversation you have with O'Brien as you study this Vietnam tale.

C. Plagiarism Activity - read the article entitled “What is Plagiarism?” Write a summary of the article and then discuss your experience with plagiarism in and out of the school setting. What are the most common forms of plagiarism? What can be done, if anything, to reduce occurrences of it? Do you feel it is a pressing issue?

Discussion Guide for "The Things They Carried"

In order to participate in the novel discussion, this sheet must be completely filled in. For some questions you are required to support your ideas with evidence from the text. Be sure to include page numbers as well. ***If necessary, attach additional sheets of paper.***

1. Consider the many paradoxes of war and how O'Brien brings them to light: "I was a coward. I went to war" (page 61); "The truths are contradictory. It can be argued, for instance, that war is grotesque. But in truth war is also beauty" (page 80). What are some other paradoxes of war? Create at least 2 of **your own paradoxes of war** based on your understanding of the novel – these are NOT found in the text.

1.

2.

2. "A true war story, if truly told, makes the stomach believe" (page 78). Which story in this collection most made your stomach believe? (which felt true) Explain your answer and support it with evidence from the text (quotes with page numbers).

3. Is it essential to you that a story be rooted in fact? Explain your answer. Support your answer with specific evidence (this could be examples from pop culture, history, literature, personal experience, etc.).

–OR– Tim O'Brien once made the following assertion in an interview with Texas Monthly: "Good movies -- and good novels, too -- do not depend upon 'accurate portrayals.' Accuracy is irrelevant. Is the Mona Lisa an 'accurate' representation of the actual human model for the painting? Who knows? Who cares? It's a great piece of art. It moves us. It makes us wonder, makes us gape; finally makes us look inward at ourselves." (Texas Monthly, Nov. 2002. Qtd. In <http://illyria.com/tobhp.html#Newsletter>)

What is an "accurate portrayal?" How does *The Things They Carried* function as art? Does it provide "accurate portrayals?" Of what?

4. How is language important to the soldiers? What type of words do they use to make their experience easier to handle? Provide a specific reference to the text (quotes with page numbers)
5. What other tricks do the soldiers use to keep themselves sane? What trick do you think you would use if you were in their position?
6. Even though *The Things They Carried* is set during the Vietnam War, in what ways is it relevant today, with regard to war and politics as well as our personal struggles?

7. Is this a useful novel to be reading as a high school student? Explain.

8. What is one of the narrator's most significant conflicts? Support your answer with evidence from the text. Is the conflict internal or external? Is the conflict ever resolved? Why or why not?

9. How does the following quote relate to the novel? "War educates the senses, calls into action the will, perfects the physical constitution, brings men into such swift and close collision in critical moments that man measures man." – Ralph Waldo Emerson

10. What is a universal subject the novel focuses on? (i.e. fate, conflict, nature, fear, loneliness, war, peace, etc.) What do you learn about that subject in this novel? Write what you learn in a complete sentence; that is a theme of the novel.

Bonus:

What literary technique does O'Brien employ most effectively? Provide 1 example and explain its purpose.

List three Level 2 questions you would like to have answered about this novel. If you do not know the levels of questioning you may google search **Levels of Questioning to find out what that means.**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What is Plagiarism? www.plagiarism.org/article/what-is-plagiarism

Published May 18, 2017

Many people think of plagiarism as copying another's work or borrowing someone else's original ideas. But terms like "copying" and "borrowing" can disguise the seriousness of the offense:

According to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, to "plagiarize" means:

- to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own
- to use (another's production) without crediting the source
- to commit literary theft
- to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source

In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward.

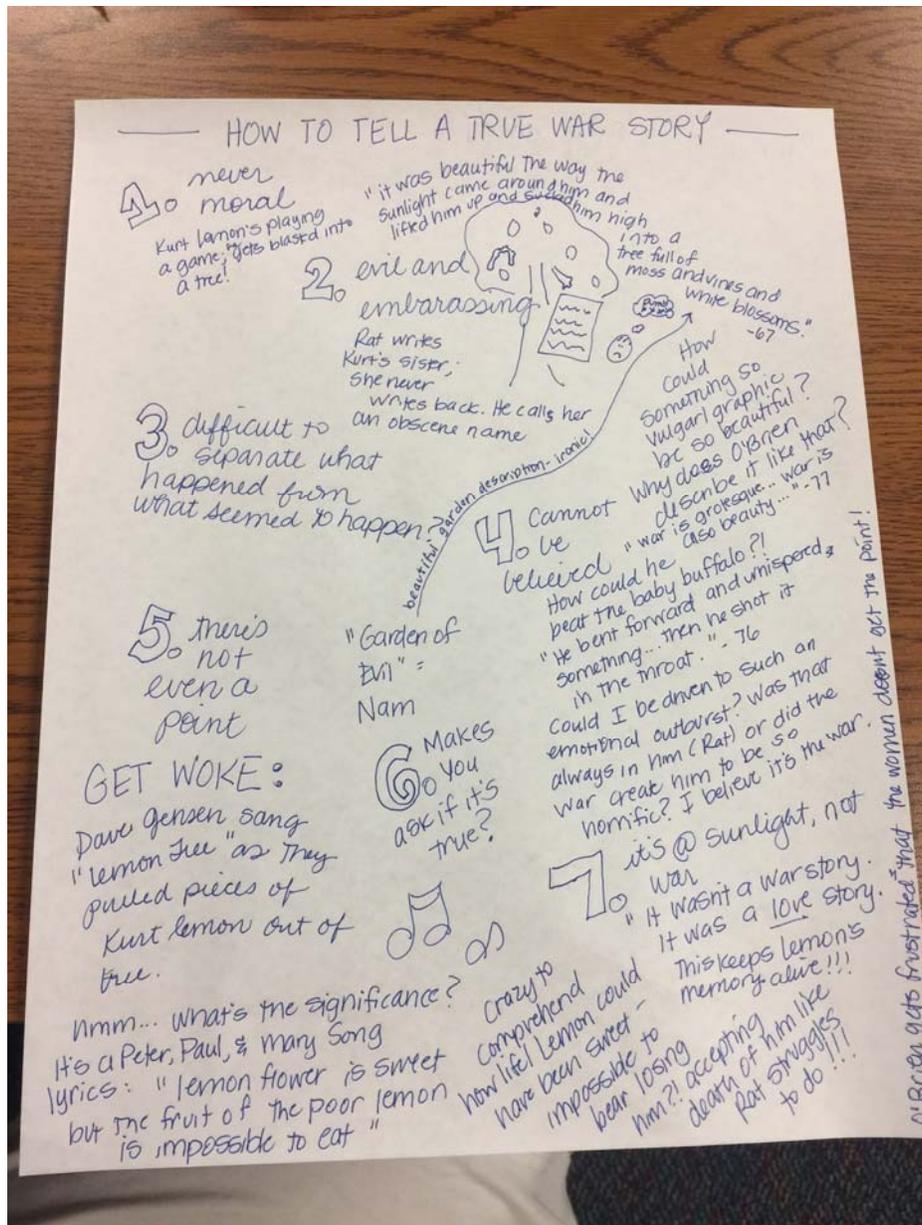
But can words and ideas really be stolen?

According to U.S. law, the answer is yes. The expression of original ideas is considered intellectual property and is protected by copyright laws, just like original inventions. Almost all forms of expression fall under copyright protection as long as they are recorded in some way (such as a book or a computer file).

All of the following are considered plagiarism:

- turning in someone else's work as your own
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not (see our section on "fair use" rules)

Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided, however, by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed and providing your audience with the information necessary to find that source is usually enough to prevent plagiarism.



Adequate Story Map Notes for a Chapter Model

Tips:

- Track thinking about character development or other features as you read
- Show analytical thinking and the ability to recognize big ideas in the book
- Extend beyond thinking to include student-generated research or sketching, poetry, and other artistic expression
- Thoughtfully identify and address areas of confusion
- Exhibit thinking NOT FOUND in other students' Thought/Story Maps