

Summer Reading for students entering AP English Literature & Composition

Our year begins with a unit in which we examine the importance of narrative perspective, with specific emphasis on short fiction. Some time during the second half of the summer, please read *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien. This work of fiction has unmistakable ties to its author's actual life experiences, which are discussed in brief commentaries O'Brien provides readers in between the stories themselves. When considered together these stories, and the author's reflection on their development, express a variety of themes.

As you read, keep a journal in which you make observations about the characters, conflicts, and chosen points of view relied on throughout the collection, as well as the author's use of literary techniques with which you are familiar. Then, compose a thesis-based essay that examines what, in O'Brien's opinion, it means to be a truthful storyteller when writing a work of autobiographical fiction. Focus explicitly on the need to deviate from "happened truth" in order to achieve "story truth," as well as any responsibilities O'Brien feels a storyteller author has to their readers when they do so.

Support of your thesis must not be limited to the author's commentary about craft. Instead, you should highlight how the stories themselves, and the specific literary techniques that have been incorporated into them, put into practice the ideas central to O'Brien's beliefs about the writing process. Use a minimum of three stories to illustrate your claim/thesis. Do not summarize the plot of these stories. Instead, assume the readers of your essay are closely familiar with them.

The maximum length for this essay is five 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](https://www.purdue.edu/owl/online-writing-lab/): <https://tinyurl.com/ycxwt5wm>

Your essay will be assessed using the College Board's essay scoring rubric for the AP English Literature and Composition Exam, a modified version of which you will find on the next page. To receive credit for this required assignment, and maintain placement in the AP English Literature and Composition class, it must be submitted to me on our Google Classroom page, for which you will receive an invitation this summer, before our first class meeting. If you have any questions, you may contact me at dosora@hvrhs.org.

I look forward to meeting you in August.



Mr. Osora

AP ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

ESSAY SCORING GUIDELINES

9–8

These essays offer a well-focused and persuasive analysis of the nature of truth in storytelling and explain with great clarity how this contributes to the meaning or overall effect of the novel. Using specific textual support, of a wide variety, these essays offer an insightful and original view of how the work as a whole is shaped by the author's beliefs about what constitutes truth when writing autobiographical fiction. Although these essays may not be error-free, they make a strong case for their interpretation and discuss the text under consideration with significant insight and understanding. Essays scored a 9 reveal more sophisticated analysis and more effective control of language than do essays scored an 8.

7–6

These essays offer a reasonable analysis of the nature of truth in storytelling and explain with clarity how this contributes to the meaning or overall effect of the novel. Analysis of how the author's view of truth shapes their respective narrative is supported by text of a more limited variety or specificity. While these papers demonstrate understanding of the text on multiple levels, the analysis is less insightful, original, accurate, and/or clear than that of the 9–8 essays. Essays scored a 7 present better-developed analysis and more consistent command of the elements of effective composition than do essays scored a 6.

5

These essays respond to the assigned task with a plausible reading, but they tend to be superficial or thinly developed, lacking insight or originality. Plot summary is often substituted for substantial analysis. Although the essay's writer attempts to discuss the nature of truth in storytelling, they demonstrate a rather simplistic understanding of its significance, with support that is too general to provide insight. While these essay's writers demonstrate adequate control of language, their essays may be marred by easily detected errors. These essays are not as well conceived, organized, or developed as 7–6 essays.

4–3

These essays fail to offer an adequate analysis of the nature of truth in storytelling and how it contributes to the meaning of both works. The analysis may be partial, unsupported, or irrelevant, and the essays may reflect an incomplete or oversimplified understanding of the text. These essays do not fully examine the author's view of how truth contributes to the meaning of their work, or may instead rely on plot summary alone. These essays may be characterized by an unfocused or repetitive presentation of ideas, an absence of textual support, or an accumulation of errors. They may lack control over the elements of college-level composition. Essays scored a 3 may contain significant misreading and/or inept writing.

2–1

Although these essays make some attempt to respond to the prompt, they compound the weaknesses of the papers in the 4–3 range. Often, they are unacceptably brief or incoherent in presenting their ideas. They may be poorly written on several counts and contain distracting errors in grammar and mechanics. The student's remarks may be presented with little clarity, organization, or supporting evidence. Essays scored a 1 contain little coherent discussion of the text.