

Summer Reading for students entering AP English Literature & Composition

Part One – Reading and Analysis for Writing (*The Things They Carried*)

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 he 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, you may wish to 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 the writer's craft. Instead, you must 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 six stories from the collection 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://tinyurl.com/ycxwt5wm): <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 at the end of this document. To receive credit for this required assignment, and maintain placement in the AP English Literature and Composition class, your must be submitted to me through our Google Classroom page, for which you will receive an invitation this summer, before our first class meeting.

A Note on Academic Honesty

The use of advanced automated tools, such as Generative AI, ChatGPT, and similar LLMs, as well as advanced AI features in tools such as Grammarly, to support the writing of assignments for this class is not permitted. This includes all regular coursework and assignments. While generative AI may be a useful tool for work in some of your classes, it is a priority of the English Department that students develop their own communication and research skills, including writing for multiple audiences and locating, reading with accuracy, and interpreting reliable sources. Students are expected to create and submit their own original work at all times. Your creativity, original voice, and unique perspective are the most important contributions you can make to the class, so please do not give them away in the name of expediency.

Violations of this policy will lead to academic consequences up to and including removal from the class. In exchange, you have my assurance that I will at no time use such tools to create lessons or activities for the class, nor to provide feedback on your writing and performance on other assignments.

Sound like a deal? Good.

Part Two - Reading and Analysis For Discussion

Early in the first marking period, each of you will facilitate a class discussion on a short story of your choosing. The second section of your summer assignment requires that you read a minimum of six short stories, each by a different writer on the [list of recommended authors](#) below.

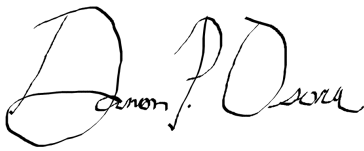
As you read, take note of the most important narrative elements of each story, using this [reading log](#). Submit the log to me via Google Classroom in advance of our first class meeting.

If you would like to include in your log a story that was not from the list of approved authors, but is of recognized literary merit, you are welcome to do so. I ask that you not include in your log stories that were previously read for (or in) another class.

(continued)

If you have any questions about any part of this assignment, you may contact me at the email address below.

I look forward to seeing you again in August.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel P. Osora". The signature is stylized with large, flowing letters and a small dot above the 'i' in "Daniel".

Mr. Osora

PART ONE SCORING RUBRIC
AP ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION
ESSAY SCORING GUIDELINES (*The Things They Carried*)

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.

PART TWO: A LIST OF RECOMMENDED AUTHORS

Alexie, Sherman
Anderson, Sherwood
Asimov, Isaac
Atwood, Margaret
Beattie, Ann
Bierce, Ambrose
Baldwin, James
Bradbury, Raymond
Brown, Jason
Babel, Iasaac
Bowen, Elizabeth
Butler, Octavia
Carver, Raymond
Cather, Willa
Cheever, John
Chekov, Anton
Chopin, Kate
Cisneros, Sandra
Currie, Ron
Dahl, Roald
de Maupassant, Guy
Dybek, Stewart
Erdrich, Louise
Faulkner, William
Ford, Richard
Gilman, Charlotte Perkins
Gogol, Nikolai
Hawthorne, Nathaniel
Hemingway, Ernest
Irving, Washington
Jackson, Shirley
Jen, Gish
Joyce, James
Kafka, Franz
Kincaid, Jamaica
Lahiri, Jhumpa
Lawrence, D.H.
Malamud, Bernard
Marquez, Gabriel Garcia
Mansfield, Katherine
Milward, Andrew
Moore, Lorrie
Munro, Alice

Olsen, Tillie
Orozco, Daniel
Ozick, Cynthia
Petry, Ann
Poe, Edgar Allan
Porter, Katherine Anne
Proulx, Annie
Saunders, George
Shepard, Jim
Tolstoy, Leo
Twain, Mark
Updike, John
Vonnegut, Kurt
Walker, Alice
Welty, Eudora
Waksberg, Raphael-Bob
Wolfe, Thomas
Wolfe, Tobias
Wilde, Oscar

RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE LIST

Murakami, Haruki (Super Frog Saves Tokyo)
Murphy, Yannick (In A Bear's Eye)
Oates, Joyce Carol (Where Are You Going...)
O'Connor, Flannery (A Good Man...)
Chung, Jules (The Hawk)
Horrocks, Caitlin (Chance Me)
Doyle, Kate (Moments Earlier)
Chiang, Ted (Story Of Your Life)
Ward, Jesmyn (Cattle Haul)
Keeble, John (Synchronicity)

[illegible]

Housatonic Valley Regional High School

Glossary of Literary Terms

English Department

The use of a common language when referring to literary elements lessens confusion and enhances the appreciation of literature. Listed below are terms the English department feels are appropriate for use with high school students. Those labeled “Core” are taught to students in all English courses at the specified grade level. Those terms labeled “Extension” are taught where particular course materials relate to those terms.

Grade 9

Antagonist: force opposing the protagonist

Character: person or animal in a story

Characterization: the way the author portrays his characters using description, dialogue, thoughts, actions, and names

Climax: point at which the outcome of a conflict is determined

Conflict: struggle between opposing forces

Denouement: the resolution of the plot following the climax

Description: a spoken or written representation of a person, object, or event

Dialogue: conversation in a narrative

Exposition: portion of a narrative that provides important background information about the characters, including their place in the setting and relationship to other characters

Falling Action: plot events that signal a return to normalcy in a story

Fiction: imaginative literature that is not presented as a fact

Foreshadowing: providing hints or clues about what will happen later in a narrative

Flashback: narrative movement back in time

Hero: a character who is admired for his or her courage and outstanding achievements

Narrator: teller of a story

Metaphor: implied comparison of two unlike things

Nonfiction: literature that is based closely on, and presented to readers as, fact

Prose: written or spoken using ordinary language

Plot: series of events in a narrative that is our main focus

Point of view: the narrator’s relationship to the story

Prologue: an introduction to a piece of literature that precedes the main story

Protagonist: main character in a story

Rising Action: plot events that intensify conflict in a story

Round/Flat Character: round characters important to the text, and are described in detail to the reader in many ways; flat characters serve a specific purpose, but are not brought to life.

Setting: historical time and geographical place

Simile: comparison using “like” or “as”

Soliloquy: in classical drama, a speech in which a character expresses his or her thoughts aloud

Subplot: a series of events in a narrative that can tie into the plot

Theme: meaning or idea expressed by literature

Grade 10

Analogy: a point-by-point comparison of two dissimilar things, intended to clarify the less familiar of the two

Anti-Hero: a main character who lacks the qualities we usually associate with heroes

Archetype: an easily recognized or very typical example of a certain person or thing

Epilogue: a follow up to a piece of literature that comments on the main story

Foil: a character who provides a striking contrast to another character

Imagery: language that appeals to the reader’s senses

Irony:

- Situational: discrepancy between what is expected to happen and what happens, or between appearances and reality.
- Verbal: discrepancy between what is said and what is meant (sarcasm)
- Dramatic: audience knows something that a character does not

Memoir: a non-fiction story that is based on the writer’s memories

Mood: feeling or atmosphere created by a story

Static/Dynamic Characters: a static character remains the same throughout the text; a dynamic character undergoes changes.

Symbolism: use of objects or characters to suggest other levels of meaning

Tragic Hero: a noble person whose downfall is brought about by a personal flaw

Grade 11

Aphorism: an observation or general truth expressed in a concise and memorable form.

Allegory: narrative whose details are more important for what they represent than for what they are

Allusion: reference to myth, history or other literature

Dialect: the speech of a specific region or group of people

Epigram: a witty or satirical observation expressed concisely

Epigraph: a phrase or quotation that appears at the beginning of a work of literature

Hyperbole: deliberate exaggeration

Idiom: an expression that has gained figurative meaning through common usage

Interior monologue: structured thoughts of a character

Motif: recurring word(s), image, object, idea or action

Oxymoron: two-word paradox

Paradox: apparent contradiction; statement that seems absurd, but is actually true

Parody: exaggerated ridicule by imitation of another word, type of literature, or style

Personification: assigning human attributes to non-humans

Satire: mockery that portrays human weakness

Stream of consciousness: uninterrupted flow of spontaneous thoughts of a character

Extension: Grades 9-12¹

Alliteration: repetition of initial consonant sounds

Anachronism: object out of its proper place in time

Anaphora: rhetorical repetition

Aphorism: brief statement expressing a truth (proverb)

Assonance: repetition of vowel sounds

Blank verse: unrhymed iambic pentameter

Consonance: repetition of consonant sounds within words

Apostrophe: address to an object, abstraction or an absent or imaginary person

Didacticism: teaching a moral or lesson in literature

Epic: long narrative poem

Epistle: formal literary letter

¹ Use where appropriate

Lampoon: satire of a particular person

Lyric: poem expressing thoughts or feelings

Meter: pattern of stresses, especially in poetry

Ode: long, serious lyric poem

Onomatopoeia: use of words whose sounds imitate their meaning

Pastoral: poem portraying rustic life, usually in an idealized manner

Persona: speaker in a poem

Repetend: a recurring word or phrase in a poem or story

Rhyme: use of similar sounds, usually at the end of lines

Rhyme scheme: pattern of end sounds

Sonnet: 14 line poem, traditionally written in iambic pentameter with a rhyme scheme

Stanza: group of lines forming a unit in poetry

Synecdoche: use of the part to represent the whole

Verisimilitude: resemblance to truth