

Advanced Placement English Language and Composition

Summer Reading Assignment

Welcome to A.P. Language and Composition! The AP Language and Composition course focuses on close analysis of language as it assists students in developing their own clear writing voice. Therefore, throughout the school year, you will be reading and analyzing a variety of nonfiction texts to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for the craft and creation of an effective piece of writing.

By completing these summer reading and language activities, you can prepare for success in this year's class activities. Begin by purchasing, borrowing from the library, or downloading and printing out from the URL below, a copy of The Things They Carried, by Tim O'Brien.

Complete text of the novel:

[http://www.mrskrill.com/resources/Electronic%20Text%20of%20TTC%20\(FULL%20TEXT\).pdf](http://www.mrskrill.com/resources/Electronic%20Text%20of%20TTC%20(FULL%20TEXT).pdf).

This assignment is due on the first day of school. We know that you won't know your schedule, so bring it on day one. Not thinking you will have English on Day One is not an acceptable excuse for not having your work.

While this book appears on the surface to be about the Vietnam War, it is much more than a war novel; it is a novel about the purpose of writing. Throughout the text, O'Brien fictionalizes events from his service in the Vietnam War to explore the nature of truth and story-telling. Each chapter works to develop an answer to the questions:

Why do we write? What purpose does writing serve?

Your assignment is divided in to two parts. You must respond to what you read in the form of a dialectical journal **AND** to use your journal to help you respond to an AP prompt.

Part I: Identifying Author's Purpose

Read the novel and respond to what you read in the form of a dialectical journal. A dialectical journal asks you to, using a two column chart, identify passages from the novel that reveal the author's purpose. The text has been divided in to three sections. Choose three chapters from each section, identify a quote that best displays the purpose of that set of chapters. You should have a total of nine (9) journal entries.

Sections (3 journals/section) (Each journal entry is worth up to 3 points.)

Section 1 - Pages 1-85

Section 2 - Pages 86-154

Section 3 - Pages 155 to 246 (end)

Format this section of the assignment as follows—be sure to complete this for nine (9) chapters:

<i>Direct Quote</i>	<i>Commentary</i>
<i>(include page number)</i>	<i>How does this quote display the purpose of the chapter? (Each response must be written using complete sentences in a short paragraph form (roughly 5-7 sentences.)</i>
Sample Entry	
"-they carried like freight trains; they carried it on their backs and shoulders-and for all the ambiguities of Vietnam, all the mysteries and unknowns, there was at least the single abiding certainty that they would never be at a loss for things to carry" (O'Brien 2)	O'Brien chooses to end the first section of the novel with this sentence. He provides excellent visual details of what each soldier in Vietnam would carry for day-to-day fighting. He makes you feel the physical weight of what soldiers have to carry for simple survival. When you combine the emotional weight of loved ones at home, the fear of death, and the responsibility for the men you fight with, with this physical weight, you start to understand what soldiers in Vietnam dealt with every day. This quote sums up the confusion that the men felt about the reasons they were fighting the war, and how they clung to the only certainty - things they had to carry - in a confusing world where normal rules were suspended.



Part II: Essay

After reading the novel, and completing your dialectical journal, type a response to the essay prompt below; required length is 200-250 words:

American poet Robert Frost observed, "No tears in the writer, no tears in the reader. No surprise in the writer, no surprise in the reader."

Frost claims that good writing worth reading and studying should be a deeply personal exercise for the writer and the reader. Write an essay that argues your position on the extent to which Frost's claims are valid. Use appropriate examples from The Things They Carried, your personal experience, or your personal observations to support your argument.

Score	Essay Rubric Descriptors
9-8 A+/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> responds to the prompt clearly, directly, and fully<input type="checkbox"/> approaches the text analytically<input type="checkbox"/> supports a coherent thesis with evidence from the text<input type="checkbox"/> explains how the evidence illustrates and reinforces its thesis<input type="checkbox"/> employs subtlety in its use of the text and the writer's style is fluent and flexible<input type="checkbox"/> has no mechanical and grammatical errors
7-6 A-/B+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> responds to the assignment clearly and directly but with less development than an 8-9 paper<input type="checkbox"/> demonstrates a good understanding of the text<input type="checkbox"/> supports its thesis with appropriate textual evidence<input type="checkbox"/> analyzes key ideas but lacks the precision of an 8-9 essay<input type="checkbox"/> uses the text to illustrate and support in ways that are competent but not subtle<input type="checkbox"/> written in a way that is forceful and clear with few grammatical and mechanical errors
5 B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> addresses the assigned topic intelligently but does not answer it fully and specifically<input type="checkbox"/> shows a good but general grasp of the text<input type="checkbox"/> uses the text to frame an apt response to the prompt<input type="checkbox"/> employs textual evidence sparingly or offers evidence without attaching it to the thesis<input type="checkbox"/> written in a way that is clear and organized but may be somewhat mechanical<input type="checkbox"/> marred by conspicuous grammatical and mechanical errors
4-3 B-/C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> fails in some important way to fulfill the demands of the prompt<input type="checkbox"/> does not address part of the assignment<input type="checkbox"/> provides no real textual support for its thesis<input type="checkbox"/> bases its analysis on a misreading of some part of the text<input type="checkbox"/> presents one or more incisive insights among others of less value<input type="checkbox"/> written in a way that is uneven in development with lapses in organization and clarity<input type="checkbox"/> undermined by serious and prevalent errors in grammar and mechanics
2-1 D/F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> combines two or more serious failures:<input type="checkbox"/> does not address the actual assignment<input type="checkbox"/> indicates a serious misreading of the text (or suggest the student did <i>not</i> read it)<input type="checkbox"/> does not offer textual evidence<input type="checkbox"/> uses textual evidence in a way that suggests a failure to understand the text<input type="checkbox"/> is unclear, badly written, or unacceptably brief<input type="checkbox"/> is marked by egregious errors<input type="checkbox"/> is written with great style but devoid of content (rare but possible)

Be certain to type the chart of valuable quotes and commentary, and the final essay.

Bring hard copies of all typed assignments, and your copy of the novel, on the **first day of school**.

During week one, we will have a Socratic seminar discussion on the novel. You will be expected, at that time, to compose text-dependent questions for various chapters, and also to be prepared for thought-provoking discussion.

