

English 12 Summer Reading & Essays
Mr. Travis

Summer 2015

INTRODUCTION

Well, you finally made it. Seniors. At Last. This summer you will be expected to read Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* (ISBN: 0618706410). O'Brien's book is a loosely connected series of stories about the Vietnam War. Annotate the book—mark key passages, words, ideas, etc. My suggestion is that you look over the given themes (see below) and as you read, note passages that deal with those themes.

1. THE NOVEL:

Some of the themes developed in *The Things They Carried* are

- Fear of shame as a motivation
- Truth being subject to storytelling
- Things carried—physical and emotional
- Pressure caused by feeling the need to adhere to some cultural or community standard of duty, courage, or patriotism
- War and love

⇒ You will be given an objective test the first day of the semester over the reading. Be sure you do it. If you do it, you will do well on the test.

⇒ You will have an in-class essay on one of these themes during the first week of school. Be sure you read and annotate your book so you can find support for your essay quickly.

2. THE ESSAYS:

Most of you plan to attend college. A large part of your college admission rests on your entrance essay because this is one of the few areas of your application that lets the university or college see your personality and perspective. In order to help you better prepare for this, **you are to write two college entrance essays this summer**. Select and answer **one** of the following Common Application essay prompts **AND** one of the ApplyTexas essay prompts. Maximum length is 650 words. Use standard MLA formatting for the essays.

1. *Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it.* If this sounds like you, then please share your story.

2. *The lessons we take from failure can be fundamental to later success.* Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?

3. Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea. What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again?

4. *Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma—anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.*

5. Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, which marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.

ApplyTexas Essay Prompts

Essay A:

Describe a setting in which you have collaborated or interacted with people whose experiences and/or beliefs differ from yours. Address your initial feelings, and how those feelings were or were not changed by this experience.

Essay B:

Describe a circumstance, obstacle or conflict in your life, and the skills and resources you used to resolve it. Did it change you? If so, how?

Essay C:

Considering your lifetime goals, discuss how your current and future academic and extra-curricular activities might help you achieve your goals.