

English 12/English 12 AP Summer Reading & Essay
Mr. Travis

Summer 2026

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* (The ISBN from the back of the book: 9780618706419; the ISBN on Amazon: 978-0544309760). 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 quiz the first full day of the semester over the reading. Be sure you do the reading. If you do it, you will do well on the quiz.

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

2. THE RESPONSE:

In addition to the in-class essay (mentioned above), sometime during the first week of school you will be asked to submit a response to the summer reading book—your opinion of it. This is to simply be at least one paragraph giving your opinion about the book: what you liked, what you didn't like, etc. Try to be as specific as you can, providing details or quotes from the text and your response to them. You may also talk about your reading experience: how it went, how you managed distractions, when you read, etc.

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Not enough to do this summer? Consider watching some of these movies (if your parents approve):

Avatar (PG-13)

Braveheart (R)

Edge of Tomorrow (PG-13)

The Avengers (PG-13)

The Lion King (G)

Hitch (PG-13)

Tommy Boy (PG-13)

Any Romantic Comedy