



Literature of War and Peace
Summer Reading Assignment
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“We make war that we may live in peace.”
-Aristotle

“If we are to teach real peace in this world, and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with the children.”

-Mahatma
Gandhi

I am so excited to be teaching *The Literature of War and Peace* this fall! For summer reading, I ask you to read *The Things They Carried* by Tim O’Brien (ISBN 978-0544309760), a collection of short stories that reads like a non-linear novel about the Vietnam War. While Tim O’Brien is a character that appears in the stories and while it reads like a memoir, *The Things They Carried* is a work of fiction.

There are numerous resources about this text available online, but I want YOUR thoughts and perspectives unsullied by other voices, so please avoid accessing *Cliffs Notes*, *Wikipedia*, *Shmoop*, *Spark Notes*, or any sources other than the text and your own brain.

ASSIGNMENT DUE on the FIRST DAY OF CLASS in August: Read and annotate the novel for the following:

- Memory Moments – Memory is a unifying motif in these stories. Annotate for the use of memory and what O’Brien seems to be saying about memory—how it shapes and is shaped by the narrator’s point of view.
- Symbols – The symbolism of what the soldiers carry is, in fact, the significance of the title. Annotate for symbols and motifs, noting what they MEAN beyond their literal physical natures.
- Tough Questions: Societal pressures, one’s own moral code, and the question of truth are all essential human conundrums that arise from internal and external conflicts. Annotate for these conflicts and themes, looking for patterns that arise from the collection.
- Any other elements or patterns that you notice: passages, recurring characters, imagery, and/or figurative language you deem significant.

I hope you are all as excited as I am about this new course! I hope you have a wonderful summer. Be safe, relax, have fun, and READ. (That's the practice of English.) I'll see you in August!