

English 12 Summer Reading & Essay  
Mr. Travis

Summer 2024

### 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 ESSAY:**

Most of you plan to attend college. A large part of your college admission rests on your entrance essay; 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 prepare to answer one college entrance essay prompt.** Select one of the following Common Application essay prompts **OR** one of the ApplyTexas essay prompts. Make notes for yourself about how you'll answer the question. This should certainly include stories and re-tellings of life events that help explain your response. During the first month of school, you'll be using these notes to construct your essay.

#### **2024-2025 Common Application Essay Prompts**

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 obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?

4. Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

### **ApplyTexas Essay Prompts**

Essay A:

Tell us your story. What unique opportunities or challenges have you experienced throughout your high school career that have shaped who you are today?

Essay B:

Some students have an identity, an interest, or a talent that defines them in an essential way. Tell us about yourself.

Essay C:

You've got a ticket in your hand – Where will you go? What will you do? What will happen when you get there?

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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