



Welcome to **AP Language and Composition**. The AP English Language course emphasizes a mix of politics, history, social sciences, current events, and non-fiction prose. This class is different from most English classes you have taken before; it will ask you to analyze writing, develop sound reasoning and argumentation, as well as examine the power of language. This summer assignment offers you a chance to create a foundation of information you will use throughout the school year.

You are required to actively engage in reading and writing prior to taking this class. You will compile a portfolio of assignments based on your experiences as a reader and a writer, which is due the first day of class and will be a significant portion of your quarter one grade. Each assignment **MUST** be typed and use MLA style where appropriate/needed. Refer to: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/> for questions on MLA formatting.

### **Purpose**

One of the major objectives of the AP Language & Composition class is to help students to become more skilled, analytical, and careful readers. It is essential that students continue to practice critical reading skills independently during the summer months. The Summer Read assignment is designed to allow students to preview major themes of the course, reflect upon and challenge their notions of reading and writing, and to instill a strong work ethic that students will be expected to maintain throughout the upcoming school year.

### **Required Reading**

I. *The New York Times* “Room for Debate” ([www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate](http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate))

II. *The Things They Carried* by Tim O’Brien

### **Grading**

- “Room for Debate”: 3 assignments @ 20 points each + 60 points
- *The Things They Carried*: 7 assignments @ 20 points each + 140 points

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**TOTAL= 200 points**



Role in the AP Language & Composition Class

- We will compare and contrast Tim O’Brien’s writing style and techniques to those of other authors, examining the role of truth in fiction and the power of story-telling. Believing that “a good reader is a re-reader,” I aim to show students a deeper understanding of the text as we revisit it together; thus, it is essential that students complete an initial reading of the novel prior to the start of the term.
- The “Room for Debate” assignments serve several purposes. First, they will help familiarize students with nonfiction texts, which much of this course centers upon. Also, students will begin to analyze the techniques used by writers to support differing viewpoints on a subject. In addition, we will be referring to this assignment later in the term as students research, gather various resources on, and create a synthesis essay about a current issue in the news. Students will be expected to use MLA formatting for their Works Cited, which they will become familiar with through the Summer Reading assignment.

**Assignment #1: Room for Debate**

- Visit the “Room for Debate” database ([www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate](http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate))
- Select one topic of your choice (scroll down to the bottom left of the page for a complete list of topics). Read the introduction and **each** editorial (typically 4-6) on the topic. This will give you some background information on the issue, as well as several perspectives from a vast array of authors.
- Create an MLA citation (works cited entry): use the entry information for an article from an online newswire or newspaper (see below). Remember to use a **hanging indent** (indent every line *except* the first one).
- In one typed page, under the MLA citation:
  - \_ Identify the different issues presented regarding this topic.
  - \_ Discuss **how** each side presents its argument.
  - \_ Discuss which side you feel is more convincing in its argument and **why**.
  - \_ In your **one-page** analysis, you should utilize at least **2 direct quotes** from the articles for support.

\*Repeat this process twice more, each time reading about a different topic.



**Sample MLA Citation**

"How to Improve the NCAA Tournament." *New York Times* 01 Apr 2010. n. pag. *Room for Debate*. Web. 17 May 2011. <<http://roomfordebate.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/04/01/how-to-improve-the-n-c-a-a-tournament/>>.

**MLA Citation Template (for this assignment)**

"Title of Discussion Topic." *New York Times* Date Published Month Year. n. pag. *Room for Debate*. Web. Date Accessed Month 2011. <insert complete URL>.



**Assignment #2: The Things They Carried**

For each assigned chapter, respond to the question in approximately **1 page typed**. In your response, prove that you read the stories, demonstrate your understanding, and most importantly, think critically about the underlying themes of the book. Provide specific evidence from the text to support your ideas. Be sure to address all parts of the question.

<b><u>Assignment #</u></b>	<b><u>Chapter(s)</u></b>	<b><u>Assignment</u></b>
TTTC #1	“The Things They Carried”	What are the “things they carried” in this story? What is the significance of these items? What do the things they carried reflect about the soldiers and their experience in war?
TTTC #2	“Love,” “Spin,” “On the Rainy River”	In the story, Tim says, "I would go to the war--I would kill and maybe die--because I was embarrassed not to" (59). What does O'Brien mean by this statement? In what ways do society's expectations about masculinity affect the men of the platoon?
TTTC #3	“Enemies,” “Friends,” “How to Tell a True War Story”	Discuss the challenges soldiers might face in communicating their experiences in war to civilians, using examples from the text. Why is it so hard to tell a true war story? How, according to O'Brien, can we tell if a war story is true?
TTTC #4	“The Dentist,” “Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong,” “Stockings,” “Church”	Describe Mary Anne's transformation. How do her actions conflict with stereotypical or traditional images about women? What might her transformation symbolize in regards to America's experience in Vietnam?
TTTC #5	“The Man I Killed,” “Ambush,” “Style”	Summarize "The Man I Killed." Why is some of the story told from the young man's perspective? What do Tim and the young man share in common? What does this story imply about men and war?
TTTC #6	“Speaking of Courage,” “Notes,” “In the Field,” “Good Form,” “Field Trip”	How do the characters in the "Speaking of Courage" story cycle, principally Bowker, Cross, O'Brien, and "the boy," deal with their feelings of responsibility and guilt over the death of Kiowa? What is Kathleen's role? Who might she represent?
TTTC #7	“The Ghost Soldiers,” “Night Life,” “The Lives of the Dead”	As you finish the book, what is your overall response to the text? How have the characters you first met in "The Things They Carried," especially Tim, changed over the course of the novel? What might you add to the list of the "things they carry"? What do you think is O'Brien's purpose in writing this book?