

College Prep English IV Summer Reading Assignment:

Read *The Things They Carried* by Tom O'Brien and then provide a literary response to the following questions. Each response should be recorded as a well developed paragraph, with an introductory sentence, a specific reference to the text, and your own explanation or commentary. Focus on the *quality* of your explanation and/or analysis. **These answers should be typed because you will upload them to Google Classroom on the first day of class.**

1. Tom O'Brien presented a speech, where he said, "War stories aren't always about war, per se. They aren't about bombs and bullets and military maneuvers. They aren't about tactics, they aren't about foxholes and canteens. A war story, like any good story, is finally about the human heart. About the choices we make, or fail to make...And a good war story, in my opinion, is a story that strikes you as important, not for war content, but for its heart content." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain your answer.
2. Were you surprised when the point of view switched to 3rd person in Chapter Two, and discovered that the narrator is the author? Explain the effect this has on the story and the way it is told.
3. What do you think is so powerful about the character Elroy that O'Brien would call him the "hero of [his] life"? Explain.
4. What commentary is O'Brien making about human nature and the differences (or lack thereof) between men and women in Chapter Nine? Explain.
5. How is the discussion of "blame" in Chapter Seventeen a powerful illustration of some tendencies of human nature during times of tragedy?