

HIGH SCHOOL | BLUE VALLEY DISTRICT NOVEL RATIONALE

***The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien**

English Language Arts, 11th Grade

WHAT'S THE STORY?

The protagonist, who is named Tim O'Brien, begins by describing an event that occurred in the middle of his Vietnam experience. "The Things They Carried" catalogs the variety of things his fellow soldiers in the Alpha Company brought on their missions. Several of these things are intangible, including guilt and fear, while others are specific physical objects, including matches, morphine, M-16 rifles, and M&M's candy.

CONNECTIONS TO CURRICULUM*

The following are some, but not all, of the connections to curriculum for this novel.

- **Unit 1: Language and Perspective**
 - Essential Questions: "How do texts reflect society both historically and linguistically?" and "How can crafting your story reflect personal identity?"
- **Unit 2: Complex Issues**
 - Essential Questions: "How does written language challenge and change an individual's mind? What role does the writer play in challenging and changing an individual's mind?"
- **Unit 3: Universal Human Experience**
 - Essential Questions: "How does sustained inquiry of the past inform and motivate change?" and "How do we prepare for an uncertain future?"
- **Unit 4: Personal Responsibility**
 - Essential Questions: "How can we challenge and develop our perspective on a real world issue?" and "How can I use my voice to create an impactful contribution?"

KEY STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain. RL.11.1
- Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text. RL.11.2
- Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama. RL.11.3

- Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging. RL.11.5
- Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading. RL.11.10
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 11–12 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. RL.11.11
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. RI.11.12
- Read and comprehend grade-level appropriate nonfiction literature. RI.11.13
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. RL.11.4