H/AP English 11 - *The Things They Carried* writing assignment choices

OPTION ONE: Creative Writing – Expand and revise the creative writing assignment that you did in class:

In *The Things They Carried*, Tim O’Brien repeatedly makes the claim that sometimes the “happening truth” does not accurately convey the essence of an experience and that a fictional “story truth” needs to be created to effectively tell a true story.

Part One: Think about a time in your own life when the “happening truth” does not effectively convey the truth of the experience. Write a fictional story that you believe conveys a stronger truth than the “happening truth” could.\*

Part Two: Explain and discuss the choices you made in your story. Describe the space between your happening truth and your story truth. What is the truth that you were trying to convey? Did it work?

If you chose this option, your part one will be longer than your part two, but your grade will be based primarily on part two. Part one can be as long as you want, but part two should be no longer than two pages. Part two must directly reference Tim O’Brien’s idea of happening truth versus story truth and also must include a close and careful rhetorical analysis of your short story.

\*Avoid something as simple as exaggerations (i.e. I said that I broke my ankle instead of spraining my ankle because that more effectively conveys how much it hurt). Your challenge and opportunity here is to create something new, and you also need to do something that is interesting enough in your story so that you will have something compelling to discuss in your part two analysis.

OPTION TWO: Analysis – How does Tim O’Brien use metafictional techniques to develop important ideas in *The Things They Carried*?

If you chose this challenging topic, you should start by creating a REP chart.

**rhetorical strategies:** here you will need to focus on metafictional techniques, which can and will tie to a wide variety of rhetorical strategies

**effect:** what is the effect of these strategies? how do they make the reader feel or view the text?

**purpose:** how do these strategies function to develop important ideas in the text?

Your essay should be no longer than four pages, and you must use specific examples from *The Things They Carried* to support your thesis.

note: If you use ANY ideas from the Calloway article, you must cite them. Remember – you have to cite ideas and information – not just quotations.

Timeline:

1/30 and 1/31 – work on your essay in class and discuss with me – make sure to keep this in your shared folder

2/2 – completed draft due at the beginning of class – peer editing

2/7 – completed essay due on turnitin.com by 2:30

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| **Category** | **A** | **B** | **C** | **D/F** |
| **Formatting** | Essay is formatted correctly | Essay has minor formatting errors | Essay has significant formatting errors | No attempt was made to format the essay correctly |
| **Grammar and Mechanics** | Clean and clear – very few errors, if any! | Small errors that do not distract from the flow of the essay | Significant number of errors  | Little or no attempt made to edit the essay |
| **Tone, Style, and Diction** | Graceful prose is characterized by mature sentence variety and complexity; tone and style reflects an awareness of the purpose and audience of the specific assignment  | Prose is clear but occasional wordiness or awkward phrasing is noted; tone and style generally reflects an awareness of the purpose and audience of the specific assignment  | Prose is marked by simple sentence structure; wordiness and awkwardness interferes with the communication of the writer’s idea; sense of purpose and audience is off | Prose is unintelligible at times; incorrect sense of purpose and audience |
| **Organization** | Essay is carefully and strategically structured; develops ideas across and between both texts; evidence and analysis are thoughtfully layered  | Essay is carefully organized and generally creates clear connections between thesis and evidence  | Texts are considered one after another OR more frequent moments of disconnect between thesis and evidence | No clear sense of overall structure or significant disconnect between thesis and evidence |
| **Evidence** | Carefully introduces and discusses relevant rhetorical strategies and specific moments from the text  | Evidence is generally introduced and discussed in a way that is relevant and effectively supports the thesis | Too much or too little evidence; more summary than necessary | Evidence is not relevant or not accurately described |
| **Rigor of Inquiry** | Essay reflects deep, careful, and creative reflection on the topic(s) at hand | Essay reflects careful reflection on the topic(s) at hand | More summary than analysis; analysis does not go beyond surface observations | Little or no attempt is made to explore the topic |