

Summer reading for AP English Language and Composition, Summer of 2010  
(in addition to the common read and the common read assignment)

Texts:

*The Things They Carried*, Tim O'Brien

*The Miracle of Language*, Richard Lederer

A book of poetry by an American author (not a compilation of poems by multiple authors, please)

Assignments:

*The Things They Carried*: As well as a collection of stories, *The Things They Carried*, is a book about storytelling. What do you think this collection says about storytelling? What is the purpose or importance of storytelling? What is the relationship of storytelling to truth? You might also want to consider the role storytelling plays in war. Find three examples from the book that illustrate what O'Brien's work reveals about the nature of storytelling. Your examples should include both O'Brien's reflections on storytelling and examples of O'Brien's narrative technique, to show both what O'Brien has to say about storytelling and how O'Brien practices the craft himself.

Then write a two-to-three-page exploratory essay including two examples from O'Brien and one or two examples from your life. Your essay should be lucid, organized, and detailed. That said, an exploratory essay, while formal, does not need to accomplish the same kind of work as a thesis-driven essay; it can respond, analyze, wander a bit. It can include first person. It should show you thinking through writing.

*The Miracle of Language*: This is your opportunity to be creative. Please create and define five new words (neologisms) that you think we need in the English language. Type up your list with definitions and brief explanations for how you came up with each. Examples of neologisms can be found at the following sites:

<http://www.wordspy.com/diversions/neologisms.asp>

<http://www.owl.net.rice.edu/~ling215/NewWords/>

examples from Word Spy

**bad tongue day, noun**

A day in which a person frequently mispronounces words and stumbles over sentences.

**awkword, noun**

A word that is difficult to pronounce.

poetry book: Choose a well-known and recognized American poet from any time period and find a collection of his or her work. Read the collection, copying down lines, words, phrases, and verses that capture your imagination in any way. What is your favorite poem in the collection? Why? Come to class prepared to explore your poet in conversation and writing. To find a poet, you might check the American Academy of Poets website at [www.poets.org](http://www.poets.org) or Billy Collins' Poetry180 Project at [www.loc.gov/poetry/180/](http://www.loc.gov/poetry/180/) You can also look in our library, bookstores, and anthologies.