**TTTC Lesson 2: Culture and History**

**DUE:**

*Cultural and historical contexts give birth to the dilemmas and themes at the center of the book. Studying these contexts and appreciating intricate details of the time and place help readers understand the motivations of the characters.*

*The Things They Carried was published in 1990, twenty years after Tim O’Brien returned from his tour of duty in Vietnam. By most estimates nearly 9 million men served in the military between 1964 and 1975. Of that number, approximately 3.5 million men served in the Vietnam theatre of operations. The draft called more than 2 million men for military service during the Vietnam era. It has also been credited with “encouraging” many volunteers to join the armed services rather than risk being drafted into combat. (Source: TheBigRead)*

**Questions after reading Handout Two and “The Things They Carried” (ch. 1)**

1. Which, if any, of the items is specific to the time period of the Vietnam War? Which items are timeless?

2. Why might Tim O’Brien choose to give each man specific items in addition to the typical soldier’s gear?

3. What do the items tell us about each solder’s duties and personality? What do we learn about their hopes and desires?

4. Imagine that you are going to war and can only take three personal items. Write a short essay (three to four paragraphs) describing each item and the reason why you want to carry it.

5. Read “Love,” “Spin,” and “On the Rainy River” (ch. 2, 3 and 4). Choose your favorite of the three stories and write a one-paragraph synopsis. Think about the ways memory unites these stories.