**Literary Discussion The Things They Carried**

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| Symbol:  War medals | Symbol:  Kathleen |
| Symbol:  Lemon Tree | Symbol:  Slaughterhouse |
| Symbol:  moccasins | Symbol:  Baby buffalo |
| Symbol:  Silk stockings | Symbol:  17 page hand written letter |
| Symbol:  Martha’s letters and pictures | Symbol:  Tongue necklace |
| Symbol:  Checkerboard | Symbol:  Maryanne |
| Symbol:  Martha | Symbol:  Linda |
| Motif:  Church/religion/morality | Motif:  Water |
| Motif:  Ghosts and Sprits | Motif:  Fog |
| Motif:  Games/recreation | Motif:  Courage and Shame |
| Motif:  Friends and Enemies | Motif:  Storytelling and letter writing |
| Motif:  Carrying weight | Theme:  There is no real truth, only perspective |
| Theme:  One can never truly heal from trauma. | Theme:  There is no morality to war. |
| Theme:  Once someone’s innocence is lost, it is lost forever. | Theme:  Soldiers/survivors need to talk about, to search for the truth of, or even to bury/escape from the memories of their experiences |
| Theme:  The enemy is everywhere, even in yourself. | Theme:  Healing cannot come from anything but yourself (religion is useless). |
| Symbol:  Knit Stocking hat | Symbol:  Dead Vietnamese soldier |

Symbol:

* Specific to a particular book
* Occurs ONCE in a piece of work (or in a single chapter).
* It is a tangible item (an actual thing) that REPRESENTS an intangible thing (idea/concept)
* How a symbol is described, used, treated by narrator and characters reveals the author’s TONE about what the symbol represents
* Symbols connect directly to a book’s motifs and a particular theme.

Motif:

* Specific to a particular book
* Occurs SEVERAL TIMES in a piece of work-through more than one chapter.
* It is not always a tangible item or even the same item. It can be a description, an image, or several closely related images and things.
* Where the motif appears and how the narrator and characters connect to it helps readers understand how the motifs connect to the plot-the motif should have a purpose in the plot itself
* Motifs connect directly to a book’s theme and often a specific symbol.

Theme:

* It is NOT specific to a particular book-rather, the theme is universal (cross cultural/cross literary)
* It is a full statement that is supported by at least ONE symbol and ONE MOTIF
* The theme is a clear indication of the author’s tone. In other words-the author uses the book (its plot, characters, motifs, and symbols) to highlight the theme which itself is the author’s feelings about the subject matter in the book

Exercise: You will pull a symbol, a motif, or a theme out of a hat. You must answer the questions according to whatever you got.

**Symbols:**

1. When does the symbol appear?
2. What does the symbol represent?
3. How do the characters and the narrator treat the symbol and why?
4. How does your symbol connect to at least one motif and one theme? (Find those people)

**Motif:**

Find at least three different places where your motif occurs and explain HOW it is used in each instance and why.

Place 1.

Place 2.

Place 3.

4. How does your motif connect to at least one symbol and one theme? (Find those people)

**Theme:**

Find at least three different ways your theme is supported by the book. Explain HOW it is used in each instance and why.

Place 1.

Place 2.

Place 3.

4. How is your theme supported by at least one motif and one symbol? (Find those people)