Reading and Pre-Writing:

1. Read Tim O’Brien’s story, “The Things They Carried.” As you are reading, underline the items that the soldiers carry with them in Vietnam. Now think about your own life. What do you carry around with you? What things are important, and which are incidental? Make two lists of the things you carry: one of the important things and one of the simply necessary or habitual. Remember, all the things we carry aren’t physical objects. **BlogPost Due: Wed. 9/06**

2. Good. Now think about your life ten years ago. Again, think about the things you carried with you then. And again, make two lists – one of the important things and one of the less important. **BlogPost Due: Fri. 9/08**

3. Read Martin Luther King’s essay, “Declaration of Independence from the War in Vietnam.” Notice that in his essay, King attempts to view the conflict from the Vietnamese perspective. What is that perspective? Think about your own life now. When have you been aligned with someone or something that was considered “the enemy” by other people around you? What did you do? How did it turn out? Remember to “think small.” In your blogpost, strive to do two things: first, describe the situation clearly; and second, strive to write a first line in your post that will grab the reader’s attention. **BlogPost Due: Mon. 9/11**

4. Read O’Brien’s “How to Tell a True War Story.” O’Brien says that in a true war story, it’s hard “to separate what happened from what seemed to happen.” Look at places in the story where you think O’Brien may be recalling what seemed to happen. Now look at your own life. Write a blogpost in which you recount a brief incident that happened to you. Tell us what seemed to happen to you. When you are choosing, think about a time when something happened to you that people didn’t believe was true when you tried to tell them about it later. Again, work for a compelling opening line. **Due: Wed. 9/13**

Essay (choose one option):

1. Using your blogposts from “The Things They Carried” and “How to Tell a True War Story,” write an essay in which you explain and describe a changing point in your life. You might use the things you carry/carried as the jumping off point for describing to the reader who you are. Look for the connections between the things and the incident, and try to relate something to your reader about who you are. The essay must be in **MLA format (12 pt, double spaced, etc)**, and no less than **three full pages** in length (~800-1000 words). You must also have an effective introduction and conclusion.
2. Using your blogpost about King’s essay as a foundation, make an argument that 
the course of action you took was the correct one. Like King, you should **clearly 
identify** your position. You might even number your points like he does. 
Remember, too, that an argument describes the **opposing viewpoint** and then 
**refutes** it. In this essay, though, you might choose to use an alternative format: for 
example, a letter, diary entry, or newspaper article. **Whatever you choose,** 
**though, you must still try to relate something about yourself to the reader.**  
And again, use an **effective introduction and conclusion.** Same length and MLA 
guidelines as above.

**Due Date:**

First Draft Posted to Blog: Mon. 9/18

Final Draft Submitted in Class: Mon. 9/25