2017-18 STUDY GUIDE

Generation to Generation

LEARN from yesterday
LIVE for today
Hope for tomorrow

— Albert Einstein

FOX CITIES PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
Where the Arts Come Alive!

Bemis Education Series
Welcome!

We are so excited that you are able to join us for the 2017-18 Bemis Education Series. Throughout this season we will celebrate and recognize generations who have paved the way and those yet to come. Join us as we explore the cultures, experiences and memories that have influenced and shaped us as individuals. With each unique performance we will learn, live and hope while we grow together through the performing arts.

We look forward to telling each unique story and providing a platform for expression through the arts. From lesson ideas and professional development workshops to backstage tours, the Bemis Education Series allows us to partner with you to provide students with exciting educational opportunities!

For questions contact the education sales department (920) 730-3726 or educationsales@foxcitiespac.com.

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Young Audiences New York’s Literature to Life Stage Presentation of
The Things They Carried
By Tim O’Brien
Tuesday, April 10, 2018
APPROX. RUN TIME: 60 MINUTES
GRADES: 10-12
WELCOME TO THE FOX CITIES P.A.C.

We are in need of an audience – are you up for the part?

THEATER ETIQUETTE

• When entering the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center, remember to show respect for others by waiting your turn and speaking quietly.

• Remember that during the performance the live performers can see and hear you. Even the smallest sounds can be heard throughout the theater, so it is best to remain quiet so everyone can enjoy the performance.

• Applause is the best way to express how much you enjoyed the performance!

• Important things to remember:
  • Student backpacks, gum, drinks and food are not allowed in the theater.
  • Cell phones should be turned off and stowed.
  • Note that recording or taking photos in the theater is strictly prohibited; however, photos may be taken in the lobby.
  • It’s a long way down – please do not drop items off balconies.

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Be prepared to arrive early – You should plan on arriving to the Center 30 minutes before the show. Allow for travel time, parking and trips to the restroom.

Know your needs – To best serve the needs of you and your students, please indicate in advance if you have individuals who require special services or seating needs upon making your reservation.

Seating – Seating is based on a number of factors including when the reservation is made, size of group, students’ ages and any special seating needs.

DID YOU KNOW?

• There are over 148 miles, or 781,440 feet of electrical wire in the Fox Cities P.A.C.

• There are eleven dressing rooms backstage, with enough room for more than 60 performers.

• Thrivent Financial Hall stage is 5,000 square feet with approximately 2,100 seats from which to watch the show.

• There is no seat in Thrivent Financial Hall further than 108 feet from the stage.
WISCONSIN ACADEMIC STANDARDS

To assist you in your planning the Wisconsin Academic Standards that are most likely to connect with this performance are listed below.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
READING/LITERATURE: Students in Wisconsin will read and respond to a wide range of writing to build an understanding of written materials, of themselves and of others.

ORAL LANGUAGE: Students in Wisconsin will listen to understand and will speak clearly and effectively for diverse purposes.

RESEARCH AND INQUIRY: Students in Wisconsin will locate, use, and communicate information from a variety of print and non-print materials.

SOCIAL STUDIES
GEOGRAPHY: Students in Wisconsin will learn about geography through the study of relationships among people, places and environments.

HISTORY: Students in Wisconsin will learn about the history of Wisconsin, the United States, and the world, examining change and continuity over time in order to develop historical perspective, explain historical relationships and analyze issues that affect the present and future.

POLITICAL SCIENCE AND CITIZENSHIP: Students in Wisconsin will learn about political science and acquire the knowledge of political systems necessary for developing individual civic responsibility by studying the history and contemporary uses of power, authority and governance.

BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES: Students in Wisconsin will learn about the behavioral sciences by exploring concepts from the discipline of sociology, the study of the interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions; the discipline of psychology, the study of factors that influence individual identity and learning; and the discipline of anthropology, the study of cultures in various times and settings.

THEATER
PLAY READING AND ANALYSIS: Students in Wisconsin will attend live theater and read plays, be able to analyze and evaluate the play and articulate (create meaning from) the play’s message for individuals and society.

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS: Students in Wisconsin will research and analyze methods of presentation and audience response for theater, the interconnections of theater, community, other cultures and historical periods for use as general knowledge.
ABOUT THE COMPANY

Literature to Life® is a legacy of the award-winning American Place Theatre, co-founded by veteran director, acting teacher and producer Wynn Handman. The American Place Theatre was founded in 1962 by Handman, with Sidney Lanier and Michael Tolan at St. Clement’s Church in New York City. It developed a reputation for fostering new works including adaptation of outstanding writers from other literary forms including Robert Lowell, Joyce Carol Oates, Ed Bullins and Sylvia Plath. The American Place Theatre nurtured and initially produced works by cutting edge American playwrights including Sam Shepard, Maria Irene Fornes, Emily Mann, Richard Nelson and Ronald Ribman. In 2012, at age 90, Handman decided to merge the program with Young Audiences New York, an organization that shared his passion for these works and can take Literature to Life® into the future.

For over 64 years, Young Audiences New York has brought innovative artistic opportunities to children and youth who would not otherwise have access to the arts. Every year, they give over 45,000 children and youth the chance to experience and create art. Young Audiences New York is proud to continue the legacy of Literature to Life®, ensuring that youth have even more chances to apply the themes of these performances to their own lives, and explore who they are and what they stand for in today’s world.

SYNOPSIS

Tim O’Brien wrote a semi-autobiographical historical novel recounting his time serving in the Vietnam War. The series includes more than 20 stories, with overlapping characters from the Alpha company. They recount various missions, memories and things they carried, including the physical objects like matches, morphine and M&M candy, as well as intangible things like guilt and fear. Young Audiences New York Literature of Life®’s adaptation presents five of the short stories, investigating the complex issues of war and the universal struggle of a soldier.
LESSON ONE: The Weight of Things

Objective: Students will mimic and follow the style of writer Tim O’Brien by connecting their personal belongings and their metaphorical feelings and emotions by composing a story.

OPENING DISCUSSION
Whether we are getting ready for the day or moving across the country, we often find ourselves carrying many items with us. What we carry often depends on where we’re going and what we’re doing. Yet there is a deeper story that can be found within the details of what we carry—what stories do our belongings tell? Consider a treasured possession—such as a lucky shirt. What makes it different from the same item that might be found at a store?

WARMUP
• On the board, write the word “Necessities.” Ask students to define the word “Necessity.”
• Read, or have a student read the following excerpt from “The Things They Carried.”

“They carried all the emotional baggage of men who might die. Grief, terror, love, longing - these were intangibles, but the intangibles had their own mass and specific gravity, they had tangible weight. They carried shameful memories. They carried the common secret of cowardice barely restrained, the instinct to run or freeze or hide, and in many respects this was the heaviest burden of all, for it could never be put down, it required perfect balance and perfect posture. They carried their reputations. They carried the soldier's greatest fear, which was the fear of blushing.”

• Next to “Necessities,” write the word “Intangible.” Ask students to define “Intangible.”
• Have students journal a list of items, both “Necessities” and “Intangibles” that they are carrying with them.

ACTIVITY
• Have students individually write a short story or passage that focuses on the items they carry.
  • (If students struggle with an idea, it may be helpful to select an individual item listed on the board, or frame the story like a letter they’re writing to a friend or relative.)
• While writing, prompt students to consider:
  • Creating a vivid description of their items, both necessities and intangibles. How heavy are they? How would you get rid of each item?
  • Describe your relationship to your items. How often do you have them with you? When do you use them? How long have you had them? Where did they come from?
  • What would happen if you lost an item? What would happen if your items broke?
  • Consider each item independently, and then as a group. What story do your possessions tell together?
• Allow students time to write. Pair students up share and respond to each other’s stories.

CLOSING DISCUSSION
What did you discover about the things that you carry? If you were setting out to an unfamiliar place or experience, what are some belongings you would bring?

Adapted from: www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/worth-weight-letter-writing-1061.html?tab=3#tabs
LESSON TWO: The War and the Media
Objective: Students will examine the intersections of war, politics, society and the media through researching popular songs from the Vietnam era.

MATERIALS
Internet access
Speakers

OPENING DISCUSSION
The Vietnam War was one of the first wars that was televised. Reporters brought daily footage and updates into homes across the United States. This accessibility of information led to many citizens forming strong opinions in support of, or against the war. One way these opinions were, and continue to be, expressed is through arts and music. Today, we’ll be investigating how several different musicians responded to the war as well as the collective impact music had on the international conflict.

WARM UP
• Watch the video clip “Anthems of Counter-Culture: Ken Burns: The Vietnam War.”
  (wpt.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/21bc289c-770a-4bb6-9ad0-80a6d5294c64/anthems-of-the-counter-culture/#.WjP6Ft-nGHt)
• Discuss with students the role of music in society and politics today. Guide the conversation with some of the following questions:
  • What are popular songs today?
    • What are the songs about?
    • Why are these songs popular? Who knows the songs?
    • Where/how did you first you hear it?
  • Who are popular musicians working today?
    • What are their songs about?
    • How have their songs changed over time?
    • What can you tell about their opinions based on their lyrics or career?

ACTIVITY
• Share with students that today they will be examining the cultural impact of music during the Vietnam War.
• Distribute the “Story of the Song” handout (pg. 9).
• Have each student select a song from the “Songs of Vietnam” list (more songs can be found through the link in the Resource Room).

Songs of Vietnam
“4th of July” - The Beach Boys
“7 O’Clock News/Silent Night” - Simon & Garfunkel
“Galveston” - Glen Campbell
“Last Train to Clarksville” - The Monkees
“The Ballad of the Green Beret” - Staff Sergeant Barry Sadler
“The Dawn of Correction” - The Spokesmen
“Eve of Destruction” - Barry McGuire
“The Wall” - Bruce Springsteen
“For What It’s Worth” - Buffalo Springfield
“Goodnight Saigon” - Billy Joel
“Sky Pilot” - Eric Burton and the Animals
“Universal Soldier” - Donovan
“Prisoners” - John Denver
“Agent Orange” - Peggy Seeger
“Handsome Johnny” - Richie Havens
“Ohio” - Crosby Stills Nash & Young
“Feel Like I’m Fixin’ to Die Rag” - Country Joe and the Fish
“I Can Feel Him in the Morning” - Grand Funk Railroad
“Ain’t Wastin’ Time No More” - The Allman Brothers Band
“War” - Edwin Starr
(Find more songs in the Resource Room)
ACTIVITY (cont.)
• Have every student listen to their song. Write initial impressions of the song on “The Story of the Song” worksheet (pg. 9). They should include initial emotional reactions, as well as any questions or curiosities the song provokes.
• Next, students should search the web for the written lyrics to their song and have these lyrics in front of them as they listen to the song a second time.
• While they listen to the song a second time, have them take notes about any historical or cultural references or phrases they might not know. After finishing the song, have them research these references and fill in the remaining space on “The Story of the Song” worksheet.
• Students should begin researching historical and biographical information about their song and its artist. They should begin with the month and year the song was created. What was happening at that time in Vietnam? In America? How was the song received?
  • Encourage students to be detailed in their research.
• Have students present their songs, as well as the highlights of their research to the class.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY
In class, or as homework, have students respond to a current popular song that addresses a social, cultural or political issue. Students should reflect and write about what they believe the message of the song is? Do they agree with its stance? How was the song received?

CLOSING DISCUSSION
Based on the songs presented, how would you describe the popular opinion of the Vietnam War? How do the songs compare to one another in terms of depth? Can you distinguish between songs intended to spur action versus those that provided catharsis? What are other ways these attitudes could be expressed and discussed?

DID YOU KNOW?
The Tet Offensive was considered a defining moment during the Vietnam War. North Vietnamese forces announced a seven day ceasefire in January of 1968, to allow for celebration of the Vietnamese New Year. On the first day of the ceasefire, the North Vietnamese army unleashed a series of attacks on 13 cities across Vietnam. Additional coordinated attacks occurred within 24 hours, totaling more than 100 different attacks.

3,895 American troops died as a result of the Tet Offensive, with an additional 4,000 Southern Vietnamese forces. North Vietnam had succeeded in changing the momentum of the conflict, but not without their own heavy casualties. The perception of US and Southern Vietnamese forces nearing victory had been shattered.

After the Tet Offensive had began, CBS television anchor Walter Cronkite traveled to Vietnam to cover the military story. Walter Cronkite was considered the most trusted American journalist. His crew captured interviews with soldiers and the people of Vietnam and aired their program on February 27, 1968. As he declared the war as “mired in stalemate,” public opinion shifted to heavy reinforce opposition to the war. Following the broadcast, political action became focused on defensive withdrawal. Lyndon Johnson also announced he would not be running for another term. Read the transcript of Walter Kronkite’s broadcast at (alphahistory.com/vietnamwar/walter-cronkite-editorial-1968/).

Source consulted: www.britannica.com/topic/Tet-Offensive
# The Story of the Song

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<th>Song:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Artist:</td>
<td>Release Date:</td>
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<td>Initial Impressions:</td>
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<td>Unfamiliar Terms and Definitions:</td>
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<td>Historical Events Surrounding the Song’s Release:</td>
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<td>Song’s Popularity/Reception:</td>
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LESSON THREE: Not Fighting for Peace

OBJECTIVE: Students will research, analyze and synthesize their own feelings regarding the draft and conscientious objectors after reviewing oral histories of conscientious objectors.

OPENING DISCUSSION
Military conscription, or the draft, has been used throughout United States history, most recently in the Vietnam War. During the Vietnam War, approximately 27 million men were eligible for military service. Over 2.2 million men were eventually drafted for the Vietnam War. 300,000 of those conscripted, or selected for service, illegally deserted rather than serving in Vietnam. It was possible to obtain a deferment for a variety of reasons. One such reason was registering as a conscientious objector.

WARM UP
• Prior to class, write the following question on the board: “In the midst of war, is it right to refuse to serve in the military? Why or why not?”
• Allow students appropriate time to reflect on the question. Have them make a few notes to justify their answers.
• Ask all students to stand. Indicate one side of the room as “No,” the opposing side of the room as “Yes” and the middle as “Undecided.” Have students walk towards their appropriate answer to the question on the board.
• Select a few students to share their justifications with the class.
• Pair students up with someone with a different opinion. Give them a few minutes to further discuss their opinions with each other.

ACTIVITY
• Share with students definitions for conscientious objector and subsequent terms.
  • Conscientious Objector: Someone possessing a fixed, firm and sincere objection to participation in any form or the bearing of arms, by reason of religious training and/or belief.
  • Religious: the term religious also includes moral and ethical beliefs that have the same force in a person’s life as traditional religious beliefs.
  • Training and/or Belief: Refers to the experiences and values you hold that do not allow you to participate in military service or the bearing of arms (i.e. a lifetime of involvement in an organized religion, previous military service, or other past life experience).
• Evaluate the presented definitions with several of the following questions:
  • What is the difference between a conscientious objector and someone who simply doesn’t want to go to war? How could the government distinguish between the two?
  • Should conscientious objectors be required to serve in some way? If so, how?
ACTIVITY (cont.)

• Share the Oral History videos (wpt.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/c736e867-2d92-44bc-9f6d-04f86225ea20/media-gallery/#.WjFsk0qnGHs). Suggest that students take notes of details and aspects of each story that they find interesting.
• Ask students to describe any aspects of the conscientious objector’s story they hadn’t considered?
• Ask students what they would think if a draft were instituted today. What would their response be like?
• Have students pick one of the following prompts, and write a letter in response:
  • As a conscientious objector: write a letter, either to a parent or close friend, explaining why you object to the draft/war.
  • As a draftee/soldier: write a letter, either to a parent or close friend, explaining why you think it’s important to go to war.
  • As a friend: write a letter to a friend you know is a conscientious objector- either explain why you support his/her decision, or why you disagree.
• Letters should address what the student thinks about the war and their reasoning. Encourage students to be specific and detailed with their thoughts.
  • It may be helpful for students to take a few moments to create a few specific details about who they’re writing to before beginning their letters.

CLOSING DISCUSSION

How have your opinions about the draft changed from when you came to class today? Do you think it is possible to resist the war and still be considered patriotic? Why or why not?

Lessons Consulted: “We Won’t Go: Refusing to Fight During the Vietnam War” and “A Different Kind of Lottery: Understanding the Draft in the Vietnam War” from www.wpt.pbslearningmedia.org

Discover the Arts

The United Service Organization, or USO, is a non-profit agency, began in 1941, that has been dedicated to providing live entertainment and programming to active duty United States military personnel. The organization was founded by Mary Ingram, who was selected by Franklin D. Roosevelt to unite six other non-profit organizations- the Salvation Army, YMCA, YWCA, National Catholic Community Services, National Travelers Aid Association and National Jewish Welfare Board to support the troops through entertainment.

The first USO station opened in Saigon, Vietnam in 1963. Seventeen additional centers were opened in Vietnam, as well as six centers in Thailand. These clubs, frequently run by women, featured a snack bar, barbershop, gift shops, overseas telephone lines, photo labs and hot showers, giving soldiers a taste of “Home Away from Home.” Additionally, USO coordinators planned and staged various performances throughout Vietnam. A total of 5,559 USO performances were presented during the Vietnam War. Soldiers enjoyed comedians, bands, musicians and dancers including notable names like John Wayne, James Brown and Bob Hope. Find out more at www.uso.org/
Lesson Four: Discovering Perspectives

Objective: Students will investigate non-Western accounts of the Vietnam War.

Materials
Excerpts from “Last Night I Dreamed of Peace: Diary of Dang Thuy Tram” (pgs. 14-16)

Opening Discussion
A central question to Tim O’Brien’s novel “The Things They Carried” is whether or not the work can be considered fiction or autobiography. O’Brien intentionally blurred the lines between fiction and non-fiction—creating new names, events, and details juxtaposed against his own memories of serving in Vietnam. While Tim O’Brien can offer us the perspective of a Vietnam veteran, war has far reaching implications and affects millions of people throughout the world. Vietnam is often seen as a complex, and sometimes confusing, time period— as alliances, politics, systems of government, culture and conflict were convoluted. Navigating this complexity requires considering alternative, and sometimes opposing, perspectives.

Warm Up
• Before class, pick a recent event all your students have experienced communally. This might be a recent school dance or assembly, yesterday’s class, homeroom or the most recent passing period.
• Prompt students to write their personal narrative of this communal event. What happened? Who were they with? What was said? How did they feel? Were there any surprises or major events?
• Encourage students to be truthful, unique and specific. There are no wrong answers.
• Allow students five to ten minutes to write their personal narrative.
• Select 3-5 volunteers to share their narratives.
• While listening, have students make notes of memorable or interesting details.
• Once all the narratives have been shared, lead a discussion about the event using a few of the questions below.
  • What were the key similarities and differences between the action and details of each narrative?
  • How was each narrative written? Describe any differences in style.
  • Did each narrative feel complete? As a listener, did it feel like things were missing?
  • Describe any overlap or intersections between the different narratives that were read.
  • How might someone’s attitude impact their writing?
  • If we were to create a “composite” story that corroborated or collaged all the narratives, what would it include? What would be left out?
  • Can all of these accounts be considered “truthful?” What about “unbiased?” How can we classify bias within these stories?

Activity
• Distribute excerpts from “Last Night I Dreamed of Peace: Diary of Dang Thuy Tram” (pgs. 14-16).
• Share with students background information on the diary:
  • Dang Thuy Tram was a 27 year old doctor who served in a civilian clinic in Quang Ngai. She cared for wounded Viet Cong and North Vietnamese soldiers who opposed American Forces.
ACTIVITY (cont.)

• Frederick Whitehurst, a soldier serving in Quang Ngai as a member of the Military Intelligence Detachment, discovered the diary among other documents with no military value. He was assigned to destroy the diary. His South Vietnamese interpreter urged him not to destroy it - stating “Fred, don’t burn this. It has fire in it already.”

• Whitehurst returned to the states with the diary in his possession. He kept the powerful artifact for 30 years - troubled by the memories it spurred while also dedicated to its historical significance. Under the encouragement of his brother, a fellow veteran, Frederick brought the journal to a conference at the Vietnam Center at Texas Tech University.

• At the conference, the Whitehursts found another veteran who was returning to Vietnam the next month, and agreed to take the journal with him. A volunteer network connected the Whitehursts to Dang Thuy Tram’s mother - Doan Ngoc Tram.

• The book was translated and published by Random House in 2007. The book has met notable success, including being featured on The Oprah Winfrey Show. In Vietnam, the book has sold 430,000 copies, the average print run of a book is around 2,000 copies.

Learn more at (www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6492819)

• Have students independently read the journal sections.

• Lead a discussion that compares and contrasts Dang Thuy Tram’s diary and the stories of Tim O’Brien.

Closing Discussion
Throughout the lesson, describe what (if anything) you learned about the Vietnam War? Did you learn about personal narrative/opinion? What information does these primary sources, although biased, offer in regard to the Vietnam War? Are there other ways to gain this information?

In the Spotlight

Tim O’Brien was born in 1946 in Austin, Minnesota and spent most of his youth in the small town of Worthington, Minnesota. He graduated summa cum laude from Macalester College in 1968. From February 1969 to March 1970 he served as infantryman with the U.S. Army in Vietnam, after which he pursued graduate studies in government at Harvard University. He worked as a national affairs reporter for “The Washington Post” from 1973 to 1974.

Following his time at the magazine, O’Brien published his first novel “If I Die in a Combat Zone, Box Me Up and Send Me Home.” Praised as both brutally honest and meditative, O’Brien continued writing, with eight novels to his credit including “The Things They Carried.” He has received writing awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, The Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Source Consulted: www.bookreporter.com/authors/tim-o%27brien
Excerpts from “Last Night I Dreamed of Peace” by Dang Thuy Tram

20 May 1968
We say farewell to our patients today. They have recovered enough to return to their combat units. Instead of being joyful and happy, we are all sad, both physicians and patients. After over a month at the clinic, they have become like friends and family. It’s wrenching to see them leave.

31 May 1968
Today we had a major base evacuation to evade the enemy’s mopping-up sweeps operation. The whole clinic was moved, an infinitely exhausting undertaking. It’s heart-wrenching to see the wounded patients with beads of sweat running on their pale faces, struggling to walk step by step across narrow passes and up steep slopes. If someday we find ourselves living in the fragrant flowers of socialism, we should remember this scene forever, remember the sacrifice of the people who shed blood for the common cause.

4 June 1968
Rain falls without respite. Rain deepens my sadness, its chill making me yearn for the warmth of a family reunion. If only I had wings to fly back to our beautiful house on Lo Duc Street, to eat with Dad, Mom, and my siblings, one simple meal with watercress and one night’s sleep under the old cotton blanket. Last night I dreamed that Peace was established, I came back and saw everybody. Oh, the dream of Peace and Independence has burned in the hearts of thirty million people for so long. For Peace and Independence, we have sacrificed everything.

20 July 1968
The days are hectic with so much work piling up, critical injuries, lack of staff personnel; everybody in the clinic works very hard. My responsibilities are heavier than ever; each day I work from dawn till late at night. The volume of work is huge, but there are not enough people. I alone am responsible for managing the clinic, treating the injured, teaching the class. More than ever, I feel I am giving all my strength and skills to the revolution. The wounded soldier whose eyes I thought could not be saved is now recovering. The soldier whose arm was severely inflamed has healed. Many broken arms have also healed.

25 July 1968
I came to sit by Lam’s bedside today. A mortar had severed the nerves in his spine, the shrapnel killing half of his body. Lam was totally paralyzed. His body was ulcerated from the chest down. He was in excruciating pain.
25 July 1968 (cont.)
Lam is twenty-four this year, an excellent nurse from Pho Van. Less than a month ago, he was assigned as supplement to the District Civil Medical Department. The enemy came upon Lam while he was on the road during his recent assignment; Lam tried to get into a secret shelter, but the Americans were already upon him when he opened the cover; the small shrapnel painfully destroyed his life. Lam lay there waiting for death. In the North, a severed spinal cord is already a hopeless case, let alone here. Lam knows the severity of his injury and is deep in misery and depression.

Oh! War! How I hate it, and I hate the belligerent American devils. Why do they enjoy massacring kind, simple folks like us? Why do they heartlessly kill life-loving young men like Lam, like Ly, like Hung and the thousand others, who are only defending their motherland with so many dreams?

29 July 1969
The war is extremely cruel. This morning, they bring me a wounded soldier. A phosphorus bomb has burned his entire body. An hour after being hit, he is still burning, smoke rising from his body. This is Khanh, a twenty-year-old man, the son of a sister cadre in the hamlet where I’m staying. An unfortunate accident caused the bomb to explode and severely burned the man. Nobody recognizes him as the cheerful, handsome man he once was. Today his smiling, joyful black eyes have been reduced to two little holes — the yellowish eyelids are cooked. The reeking burn of phosphorus smoke still rises from his body. He looks as if he has been roasted in an oven.

I stand frozen before this heartbreaking tableau.

His mother weeps. Her trembling hands touch her son’s body; pieces of his skin fall off, curled up like crumbling sheets of rice cracker. His younger and older sisters are attending him, their eyes full of tears.

A girl sits by his side, her gentle eyes glassy with worry. Clumps of hair wet with sweat cling to her cheeks, reddened by exhaustion and sorrow. Tu (that’s her name) is Khanh’s lover.

She carried Khanh here. Hearing that he needed serum for a transfusion, Tu crossed the river to buy it. The river was rising, and Tu didn’t know how to swim, but she braved the crossing. Love gave her strength.

The pain is imprinted on the innocent forehead of that beautiful girl. Looking at her, I want to write a poem about the crimes of war, the crimes that have strangled to death millions of pure and bright loves, strangled to death the happiness of millions of people, but I cannot write it. My pen cannot describe it all, even though this is one case I feel with all my senses and emotions.

5 August 1969
I’m on a night emergency-aid mission, going through many dangerous parts of the national highway on which enemy vehicles frequently commute, and passing through the hills filled with American posts. Lights from the bases shine brightly; I go through the middle of the fields of Pho Thuan. Bright lights shine from three directions around me: Chop Mountain, Cactus Mountain, and the flares hanging in midair in front of me. The light sources cast my shadows in different directions, and I feel like an actor on stage, as in the days when I was still a medical student performing in a choir. Now I am also an actor on the stage of life; I am taking the role of a girl in the liberated area,
5 August 1969 (cont.)
wearing black pajamas, who night after night, follows the guerrillas to work between our areas and those of the enemy.

Perhaps I will meet the enemy, and perhaps I will fall, but I hold my medical bag firmly regardless, and people will feel sorry for this girl who was sacrificed for the revolution when she was still young and full of verdant dreams.

20 June 1970
Suddenly I recall a line from a poem:

Now immense sea and sky
Oh, uncle, do you understand this child’s heart...

No, I am no longer a child. I have grown up. I have passed trials of peril, but somehow, at this moment, I yearn deeply for Mom’s caring hand. Even the hand of a dear one or that of an acquaintance would be enough.
Come to me, squeeze my hand, know my loneliness, and give me the love, the strength to prevail on the perilous road before me.
Don’t let this experience end with the drop of the curtain. Keep the conversation going with your students and reflect on the performance that you just attended. Here are a few questions to get the conversation started!

• Between the five stories in “The Things They Carried”, which one did you connect with most?

• How did the actor transition between stories? Was it effective?

• What was it like to have a singular actor tell the story? How would it have been different with a larger cast?

• How do you think the author, Tim O’Brien, felt about war? Do you agree or disagree with him? Explain.

• Do you believe war is ever justified? If not, how should we respond to national or international threats? If so, under what conditions?

• *The Things They Carried* is semi-autobiographical, both the main character and the author share the name Tim O’Brien. In what ways do you see the work as fiction? In what ways is it non-fiction? If you’ve read the book, do your feelings about the performance differ from reading the text?

• Even though *The Things They Carried* is set during the Vietnam War, in what ways is it relevant today, both in regards to war and politics as well as our personal struggles?

• How was the lighting, sound, costume and scenery used to tell the story? As one of the designers, what might you have done differently?
BOOKS
“The Things They Carried” – by Tim O’Brien

“Last Night I Dreamed of Peace” - Dang Thuy Tram- The diary of a female Vietnamese doctor serving during the Vietnam War.

VIDEOS
How to Tell A True War Story- Abridged- Tim O’Brien talks about storytelling in this 11-Minute Video. www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQHEcR6cPQE

WEBSITES
Arts Edge- Site dedicated to Arts Integration in the classroom. Includes definitions, presentations and lesson ideas. www.artsedge.org

Vietnam Discography:- A list of songs, artists and record labels that were relevant to the Vietnam War. www.lasalle.edu/digital/Keesing/Vietnam_on_Record.pdf

The Things They Carried- An online text of the short story by Tim O’Brien. web.archive.org/web/20011222025122/www.nku.edu/~peers/thethingstheycarried.htm

Lesson Plan about the Draft- A complete lesson plan where students re-enact the draft and evaluate the logistical details of its implementation. https://wpt.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/12fdbuf3d-a11d-4431-8702-be41f5198c29/a-different-kind-of-lottery-understanding-the-draft-during-the-vietnam-war/#.WgNU2GiPKHs

This educator resource guide is created as part of The Boldt Company Beyond the Stage Education Program.
THANK YOU TO OUR SERIES PARTNERS FOR MAKING THIS PERFORMANCE POSSIBLE!

Our partners love to hear from you! Mail or drop off cards, letters or pictures to the Center and we will share with them.

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