

# *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien

## LITERATURE CIRCLES SCHEDULES & ROLE SHEETS

**Introduction:** In order to understand and absorb the novel more thoroughly, the class will break into three "literature circles" modeled after the very popular book groups that have sprung up across the country in the last few years. For each session of the circle, each person will take a different role in the group in order to facilitate a complete and lively discussion of the book. When the book is finished, each circle will produce a group presentation for the class (guidelines to follow), which will summarize and highlight what the circle felt was important about the book. Finally, each student will write his or her own essay about the book.

### Roles:

|   |                                      |  |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | <a href="#">Discussion Director</a>  | Develops a list of questions   |
| 2 | <a href="#">Highlighter</a>          | Locates a few special sections of the text to read aloud.                      |
| 3 | <a href="#">Illustrator</a>          | Provides a sketch, cartoon, diagram, flow chart, collage or other visual image |
| 4 | <a href="#">Real World Connector</a> | Finds connections between the book and the world outside.                      |
| 5 | <a href="#">Summarizer</a>           | Prepares a brief summary of the reading.                                       |
| 6 | <a href="#">Investigator</a>         | Digs up background information on any topic related to the book.               |

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## Lit Circle Roles

### 1. Discussion Director

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle \_\_\_\_\_

Assigned Reading: \_\_\_\_\_

**Discussion Director:** Your job is two-fold; first, to determine the order of the various roles, and second, to develop a list of questions that your group might want to discuss about this part of the book. Don't worry about the small details; your task is to help your group talk over the big ideas

in the reading and share their reactions. Usually the best discussion questions come from your own thoughts, feelings, and concerns as you read, which you can list below, during or after your own reading of the assigned text. Or you may use some of the general questions below to develop topics for your group.

**Possible discussion questions or topics for today:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Sample Questions:**

What was going through your mind while you read this?

How did you feel while reading this part of the book?

What was discussed in this section of the book?

Did today's reading remind you of any real-life experiences?

What questions did you have when you finished this section?

Did anything in this section of the book surprise you?

What are the one or two most important ideas?

Predict some things you think will happen next.

**Topic or discussion thread to be carried to next meeting:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Lit Circle Roles

### 2. Highlighter

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle \_\_\_\_\_

Assigned Reading: \_\_\_\_\_

**Highlighter:** Your job is to locate a few special sections of the text that your group would like to hear read aloud. The idea is to help people remember some interesting, powerful, funny, puzzling, or important sections of the text. You decide which passages or paragraphs are worth hearing, and then plan how they should be shared. You can read passages aloud yourself, ask someone else to read them, have people read them silently and then discuss, or read portions of dialog as if you were reading a play.

| Location / Selection Title |            | Reason for Picking | Plan for Presentation |
|----------------------------|------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Page:                      | Paragraph: |                    |                       |
| Title:                     |            |                    |                       |
| Page:                      | Paragraph: |                    |                       |
| Title:                     |            |                    |                       |
| Page:                      | Paragraph: |                    |                       |
| Title:                     |            |                    |                       |
| Page:                      | Paragraph: |                    |                       |
| Title:                     |            |                    |                       |

**Possible reasons for picking a passage to be shared:**

Important, Informative, Surprising, Controversial, Funny, Confusing, Well-written, Thought-provoking, good metaphor/simile, Poignant, Inspiring, Provocative, Weird, Scary....

**Other:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Topic or discussion thread to be carried to next meeting:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Lit Circle Roles

### 3. Illustrator

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle \_\_\_\_\_

Assigned Reading: \_\_\_\_\_

**Illustrator:** Your job is to draw some kind of visual image related to the reading. It can be a sketch, cartoon, diagram, flow chart, map, floor plan, or stick-figure scene. You can draw a picture of something that's discussed specifically in your book, or something that the reading reminded you of, or a picture that conveys any idea or feeling you got from the reading. Any kind of drawing or graphic is okay; label items with words if that will help clarify the graphic for your circle. You may also find pictures or graphics, rather than produce them yourself, although you are encouraged to exercise your own creativity in this role.

**Presentation Plan:** When the discussion director invites your participation, you may show your picture without comment to the others in the group. One at a time, they get to speculate what your picture means, to connect the drawing to their own ideas about the reading. After everyone has had a say, you get the last word: tell them what your picture means, where it came from, or what it represents to you.

**Topic or discussion thread to be carried to next meeting:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## *Lit Circle Roles*

### 4. Real World Connector

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle \_\_\_\_\_

Assigned Reading: \_\_\_\_\_

**Connector:** Your job is to find connections between the book your group is reading and the world outside. This means connecting the reading to your own life, to happenings at school or in the community, current national or world events, to historical issues, events, or conditions, to other people or problems that you are reminded of. You might also see connections between this book and other writings on the same topic, or by the same author.

**Some Connections I found between this reading and other people, places, events, authors...**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Topic or discussion thread to be carried to next meeting:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## **Lit Circle Roles**

### **5. Summarizer**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle \_\_\_\_\_

Assigned Reading: \_\_\_\_\_

**Summarizer:** Your job is to prepare a brief summary of today's reading. The other members of your group will be counting on you to give a quick (one or two-minute) statement that conveys the gist, the key points, the main highlights, the essence of today's reading assignment. If there are several main ideas or events to remember, you can use the numbered slots below.

**Summary:**

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**Key points:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Topic or discussion thread to be carried to next meeting:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Lit Circle Roles

### 6. Investigator

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle \_\_\_\_\_

Assigned Reading: \_\_\_\_\_

**Investigator:** Your job is to dig up some background information on any topic related to the book. This might include:

The geography, weather, culture, or history of the book's setting.

Information about the author, his/her life, and other works

Information about the time period portrayed in the book.

Pictures, objects, or materials that illustrate elements of the book.

The history and derivation of words or names used in the book.

Music, art, or foods that reflect the book or the time.

This is not a formal research project. The idea is to find information or material that helps your group understand the book better. Investigate something that really interests you---something that struck you as puzzling or curious while you were reading. Please do not simply churn out webpages, though. You should be able to tell your group about what you found in your own words. Attach supporting materials to this page to turn in.

**Ways of gathering information:**

The introduction, preface, or "about the author" section of the book.

Library books and magazines

On-line computer search or encyclopedia

Interviews with people who know the topic (one of your other proffs?)

Other novels, nonfiction, or textbooks you've read.

Topic or discussion thread to be carried to next meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

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