



Dear Incoming Juniors,

Sarah PW and I look forward to teaching you American literature. To jumpstart our conversation and provide a starting place for our journey, you will read two books and complete three assignments relating to them. The books are relatively recent classics that many of your parents (and all of this year's seniors) have read; please feel free to engage in discussions with them. The books are Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* and Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*.

There are three assignments for you to complete that are described on the following pages. Have fun and happy reading!

Yours,

Joshua W. Hutchison
Sarah Pierson Wolff

Crossroads College Prep School
11th grade Summer Reading 2008 (part 1 of 3)

The Joy Luck Club is a novel about eight women; it is occasionally hard to keep them straight. Please take notes on this chart as you read, recording salient plot details about the characters as well as any quotations that help elucidate the women's characters.

Mothers

Daughters

Suyuan Woo	Jing-mei "June" Woo
An-Mei Hsu	Rose Hsu Jordan
Lindo Jong	Waverly Jong
Ying-ying St. Clair	Lena St. Clair

Crossroads College Prep School
11th grade Summer Reading 2008 (part 2 of 3)

Analytical Writing Assignment on *The Joy Luck Club*

The novel *The Joy Luck Club* is told in four sections: “Feathers From a Thousand Li Away,” “The Twenty-Six Malignant Gates,” “American Translation,” and “Queen Mother of the Western Skies.” Before each of the sections, the author tells a short parable. As a way for us to ascertain your comprehension of the novel’s themes and the strength of your analytical writing, please choose ONE of the four sections and write ONE paragraph defending the given parable as an introduction to the themes of the section that follows. Your first sentence will serve as a thesis (or topic sentence) for the paragraph’s argument. (Use the standards for analytical writing you learned in Anne’s class; refer to the Handbook as necessary to ensure adherence to form.)

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The Things They Carried may seem like a collection of short stories, but it is generally considered to be a novel unified by character and theme. To evaluate the unity of what is a challenging piece of fiction, please fill out the following information for each of the twenty two chapters. Please follow this format:

Title:

Page # in your copy of the book:

Major Characters:

Plot summary (a full paragraph of at least five sentences):

Reflection (a full paragraph of at least five sentences):

You may ask yourself, “Self, what is the difference between summary and reflection?” I will tell you. Summary answers the question, “What happens in the story?” Most summaries will agree regardless of who produces them. Reflection, however, relies on you to think about and react to the text. Your reflection, therefore, will be quite different than your classmates’. Try to answer the question “What does X mean?” and “Why is X included?” In your reflection, you should analyze how each chapter contributes to the themes of the book, identify stylistic devices employed, and discuss the emotional and intellectual messages it is meant to convey. In short, analyze HOW it is written (style, language, devices; “the bricks, mortar, paint”) and how it influences WHAT that excerpt means (theme, big ideas, traditional literary analysis). You should include your own reactions as well, but they should be well thought out and explained fully. (“This chapter was stupid,” does not work. “I was incredibly uncomfortable and anxious when...” does.)

Please have fun with your reading and writing, but be neat. Typing, as always, is ideal, but clearly labeled and neatly presented handwritten work is acceptable.

You will need your novels and writing assignments on the first day of school.

Remember, this is our first impression of what kind of student you want to be as an 11th grader. Make it good.