

The Things They Carried
--On the Rainy River

A deeper look into an important chapter

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.” Martin Luther King, Jr.

Finish these statements:

1. A leap of faith is a moment in life when
2. It takes courage to (list three things)

Review the section where O'Brien describes his job, beginning with “I spent the summer of 1968 in an Armour meatpacking plant...” to “And there was also that draft notice tucked away in my wallet.”

1. In what ways is O'Brien's “dirty job” important? What happens if no one does this job?
2. Pretend you are in charge of hiring at Armour. Create a one or two sentence job description for this job, in which you make it sound less “dirty” than it is.
3. Was this a job that O'Brien liked? Explain. Does he plan on making Armour a career? How do you know?
4. Why did he say “it was tough getting dates that summer”?
5. The description of the job at Armour is often said to be a parallel to war itself. From just this section, isolate **words** that sound like “war” or “brutality.” List at least ten.

6. Throughout this section, O'Brien tells why he did not want to go to war. List several reasons here.

7. O'Brien's time at the Tip Top Lodge is a sharp *contrast* to his job at Armour.

Armour	Use quotation marks	Tip Top Lodge
	Colors, sounds, smells.	
	How he feels?	

8. O'Brien's time with Elroy Berdahl was his "a moment of challenge," as he contemplates whether or not to cross into Canada and defy the draft. Use the table below to show the impact of the six days he spends at Tip Top Lodge.

Tim	Give examples for each item below. If you are using a character's speech, put quotation marks around his words.	Elroy
	Father/Son relationship	
	Daily Life They do these things together, so character side doesn't matter.	
	Personal Values (What matters? What's important?)	
	Tim's decision making process	

9. In the end, O'Brien tells us "I was a coward. I went to the war." Explain this paradox.