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

**STEP ONE: Three Levels of Reading**

Complete the following activities on a sheet of **blank, white paper**.

1. Select one of the following three chapters (whichever one you finished most recently):
   * “On the Rainy River”
   * “How to Tell a True War Story”
   * “The Sweetheart of Song Tra Bong”
   * “The Man I Killed”
2. Across the top of the paper, write the title of the book (underlined), the name of the chapter (“in quotes”), and the author’s name.
3. Draw three large concentric circles on the paper (one circle inside another circle inside a larger circle). Make sure your outer circle takes up the whole page.
4. For the innermost circle, concentrate on the concrete level of meaning— *reading on the lines.*
   1. Write the **most significant word** from the chapter.
   2. Quote the entire sentence in which the word appears— or enough of the sentence to reveal the word’s use in context. Document the source of the quotation with the author’s last name and page number in parentheses. Just like this: (O’Brien 42)
   3. Write multiple dictionary definitions of the word (denotation). (There are dictionaries on the bookshelf in the front of the room, or you can use your personal electronic device to look up the word.)
   4. Explain why the word is important to the meaning of the work by placing it in the context of the narrative.
5. In the middle circle, concentrate on the abstract level of meaning— *reading between the lines.*
   1. Referring to the text, draw four images from the reading.
   2. Write an explanation of the link between each image and the word you have written in the innermost circle.
6. In the outer circle, concentrate on the thematic level of meaning— *reading beyond the lines.* Write two thematic statements drawn from the significant word you wrote in the innermost circle and the images you drew in the middle circle. These should be universal thematic statements and should not refer directly to the text. If you need help, review the theme ideas (below) that we read about before we started the book:

**Mortality and Death** - The threat, even expectation, of death hangs over all of the soldiers throughout the novel, and multiple deaths occur throughout the novel.

**Social Obligation** - Even if they volunteered to fight, many soldiers joined the army because of the unspoken pressure to fulfill their obligations as citizens and soldiers.

**Storytelling and Memory** - the author reflects on the value of these stories both in the context of the war and then post-war; the very role and purpose of "war stories," and how they can be told "correctly" and how to tell whether or not one is "true." The author clearly believes that stories have the power to give an entire life to those who have passed on.

**STEP TWO: Written Reflection on Theme**

On the back of your paper, complete the following activities.

1. At the top of the paper, write a thematic statement about the chapter.

*EXAMPLE:* The play *Romeo and Juliet* is largely about doomed love and asserts that people who rush into love and unabashedly follow their feelings will most likely have a love affair that ends in tragedy.

In *The Things They Carried*, the chapter titled \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
  
is largely about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and asserts that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(main theme)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

(statement that explains the author’s commentary on or argument about the theme)

1. Do some research and list **five examples** of outside texts that exhibit one or both of the same themes you came up with. Outside texts might include: books, poems, songs, speeches, movies, TV shows, advertisements, etc. (You can discuss this part with your group members if you need help.)
2. For each of the five texts, briefly explain how it exhibits your chosen theme.