Sam Houston State University

You’ll Never Walk Alone Fall 2023 Common Reader Freshman Essay Contest

*The Anthropocene Reviewed: Essays on a Human-Centered Planet* by John Green

**Purpose**

This essay invites an opportunity to explore your connection to themes in the 2023-2024 SHSU Common Reader and qualify for a scholarship.

**Common Reader Essay Prompt**: You’ll Never Walk Alone: Four Stars  
“I think two of the fundamental facts of being a person are 1. We must go on, and 2. None of us ever walks alone. We may feel alone (in fact, we will feel alone), but even in the crushing grind of isolation, we aren't alone.” ― John Green. In The Anthropocene Reviewed, John Green refers to the song “You’ll Never Walk Alone”. This song appears in a musical, at graduation ceremonies, funerals, and in other moments of great challenge and great success.

Please write about a time when you faced a challenge, when you felt like you had to face it alone and you decided to be strong and to “go on”. Did you discover there were others there to support you, or even others who were going through the same challenges who bolstered your courage and persistence to move forward? Similar to John Greens essays, write about such a time in your life. It can be a time in school, at work, or in a personal situation. Please speak specifically to what the challenge was, how you decided to “go on” and who in your community supported/helped you persist through the challenge. Finally, what were the important lessons you learned from this experience? How many stars would you give this experience?

**Eligibility**

The contest is open to all first-time freshmen who are enrolled full-time (minimum 12 hours) at Sam Houston State University in the fall 2023 semester, and who have read all or parts of the book. This essay prompt is inspired by the Introduction and Chapter 1: You’ll Never Walk Alone, pp. 1-12. Students must also complete the Scholarships for Kats application to be eligible to receive SHSU Common Reader scholarship awards.

**Awards**

Scholarships valued at a total of $600 will be awarded to new first-time freshman students submitting the top three winning essays according to scholarship rules.$300 First Place, $200 Second Place, and $100 Third Place awards.

**Application**

Essays must be submitted by 5:00 pm, Monday November 14, 2023, to the SHSU Common Reader Program at [commonreader@shsu.edu](mailto:commonreader@shsu.edu) **All submissions must be electronic submissions,** and must be typed and sent as email attachments (Microsoft Word documents, RTF files, or PDF files only).

**Rules of the Contest**

1. All applicants must be new first-time freshmen enrolled at Sam Houston State University full-time during the fall 2023 academic term.
2. All essays must be typed, double-spaced, on white, 8 ½” x 11” paper and free of any remarks or grade.
3. All submissions must include the submission cover form on the next page with complete information. **The essay itself must not contain the student’s name since essays will be evaluated anonymously.** The submission cover form with identifying student information should be the first page of your submission followed by the essay with no identifying information. (The cover form will not count toward the word count for the essay.)
4. A student may submit only one entry, and submission must be received by 5:00 pm Thursday, November 16, 2023.
5. Winners will be notified by the Sam Houston State University First-Year Experience Office. Students must also complete the Scholarships for Kats application to be eligible to receive SHSU Common Reader scholarship awards.
6. There is no minimum length requirement. The maximum length is 2500 words.

SUBMISSION COVER FORM

Sam Houston State University

Common Reader Program

Fall 2023 Freshman Essay Contest

Entry due no later than 4 p.m. Thursday November 16, 2023

Electronic email submissions with the cover letter to [commonreader@shsu.edu](mailto:commonreader@shsu.edu)

Student’s Full Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student’s ID Number \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Email Address \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I am submitting an original essay for the SHSU Common Reading

fall 2023 Freshman Essay Contest. I certify that this essay is my own work.

I understand that my essay will not be returned to me and may be used by

Sam Houston State University for publication in promotional materials.

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Student Signature Date