Sam Houston State University

Spring 2024 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**:   
The Anthropocene is the current geologic age, in which humans have profoundly reshaped the planet and its biodiversity. In these essays author John Green reviews different facets of our human-centered planet and reveals the contradictions of contemporary humanity.

John Green believes that an overarching contradiction in contemporary human life is that, as a species, we are both far too powerful and not nearly powerful enough, a paradox that came into sharp focus as we faced a global pandemic that both separated us and bound us together.

Give an example of how the global pandemic both separated you and bound you together with others in your personal experience. Also, as you look back now, reflect on the changes (positive and negative) in your life due to your experience with the pandemic.

**Eligibility**

The contest is open to all freshmen who are enrolled full-time (minimum 12 hours) at Sam Houston State University in the spring 2024 semester, and who have read all or parts of the book. 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 4:00 pm, Friday, April 19, 2024, 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 4:00 pm Friday, April 19, 2024.
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

Spring 2024 Freshman Essay Contest

Entry due no later than 4 p.m. Friday, April 19, 2024

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

Spring 2024 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.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature Date