



THOMAS

Common Read 2022

Instructions

The Thomas College Common Read is our invitation to join our academic community of individuals who share and explore ideas together.

After reading and reflecting on this year's selections, *Still I Rise* and *On the Pulse of the Morning* by Maya Angelou, create a written response from one of the options listed below. During your first-year experience course, you will have an opportunity to discuss what you have written along with other students in your class.

Option 1

Angelou's *Still I Rise* explores the power of resilience when facing barriers or challenges, especially those involving the expectations of others. "Just like moons and like suns,/With the certainty of tides,/Just like hopes springing high,/Still I'll rise."

For this writing option, identify a time when you found yourself facing a barrier or unexpected challenge, but rather than be discouraged you found a way to have your hopes spring high—to rise above what threatened to pull you down. What was your barrier or unexpected challenge? What did you do to overcome it?

Consider the following when outlining your essay:

- Describe the specific situation in which you realized that you were facing a barrier or unexpected challenge. What role did the expectations of others play in that barrier or challenge?
- How did you choose to respond in this situation, and how did others react? Were you ultimately freer or more hopeful in the process? In what way?

Option 2

In looking toward promising futures and the changes we must make to reach them, Angelou writes, "Lift up your hearts/Each new hour holds new chances/For a new beginning."

For this writing option, choose a time when you were excited about a new beginning, a time when you would leave the past behind for a new start. What were you leaving behind, and what were you looking forward to?

Consider the following when outlining your essay:

- Identify the specific situation you had to let something go to reach your new beginning. How were you able to make the decisions to take the new chances?
- Angelou writes that "You may have the grace to look up and out" toward this new beginning. Is there a person who may have helped you look toward a new possibility? Who might it have been, and how did they help in the process?

(continued on back)

A word about writing. . .

Write at least 500 words (two typed double-spaced pages). Provide illustrations or examples from your life to support your work. Since your response will also be read by your first-year experience course instructor and your faculty advisor, you should demonstrate your understanding of appropriate sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and word choice.

Please return your essay by Friday, August 5th to

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If you email your essay, please save it as a Microsoft Word document or PDF.

If you have any questions about the Common Read project, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Edwards or Dr. Debbie Cunningham, Vice President of Student Success and Engagement. Debbie's telephone number and email address are (207) 859-1297 and debbie.cunningham@thomas.edu. She will be happy to help you in any way she can.

We are looking forward to receiving your project, and to welcoming you on campus this fall.

Our best wishes to you this summer and for the coming semester!