



Common Read 2025

Instructions

The Thomas College Common Read is your first opportunity to respond as a member of our academic community, a community of individuals who share and explore ideas together.

After reading and reflecting on this year's selection, *The Book of Delights* by Ross Gay, create a written or video response to one of the options listed below. During Fall Orientation, you will have an opportunity to discuss what you have produced along with other students in your class.

Option 1

Gay's essays are reflections on finding delights in mundane moments, even those which offer challenge or adversity. When he describes finding delight in working through challenging moments, he gives his readers glimpses into how he approaches such moments. He emphasizes the importance of consistency in success in one essay. In another essay, he notes the value of giving himself permission to "blow it off." In another essay, he challenges his readers to engage in honesty by calling for a "do-over" rather than making excuses when something doesn't go well.

For this response option, identify a time in your life where you faced some challenge or adversity and ultimately found delight by working through it. Describe the challenge you faced and the delight you found as you worked through it. What was the challenge and how did you respond? Did you find delight in the challenge or in the relief of the adversity?

Consider the following when planning your essay or video response:

- Describe the specific situation you found yourself in. What (or who) was the challenge or the adversity you faced? What approaches helped you to find the delight during or beyond the challenge?
- What is the reflection on delight that you could see in the situation?

Option 2

In reflecting on delight and how we respond to challenges, Gay points out that he, in some cases, chooses to approach activities and moments in ways that are counter to intuition or common practice. For example, he observes that he values handwriting a draft, because handwriting slows down his writing process and leaves more space for reflection. In another essay, he deliberates about sharing sorrows with another person as a process to cultivate joy.

For this response option, choose an event or activity that you chose to approach differently than many of those around you. Describe the value of that difference. What contribution did the difference in your approach make to you or those around you? How did you come to select this approach?

Consider the following when outlining your essay or video response:

- Identify the specific event or activity you chose to approach in a way that is counter to intuition or common practice. What was your approach?
- Who or what factored into your decision to engage in an unorthodox approach? How did the approach cultivate delight?

A word about responding. . .

Respond with at least 500 words, written or videoed. Provide illustrations or examples from your life to support your response. Since your response will also be reviewed by your first-year experience course instructor and your faculty advisor, do not rely on a chatbot or other artificial intelligence (AI) source for composing your response. Instead, respond in your own voice and from your own experience as a member of our academic community that values authenticity in reflective, professional communication.

Submit your essay or video response through the Onboarding Checklist site in Canvas by Friday, August 1.

If you have any questions about the Common Read project, please do not hesitate to contact the following individual:

Sammy Grimaldi, First Year Experience Coordinator
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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!