



Common Read 2026

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, *We Are Not Strangers* by Josh Tuininga, create a written, video, or graphic panel response to one of the options listed below. During New Terrier Orientation in September, you will have an opportunity to discuss what you have produced along with other students in your class.

Option 1

Inspired by a true story, Tuininga's graphic novel is a retelling of one man's quiet and selfless acts of service and courage. Tuininga writes, "As the months dragged on...my papoo waited patiently. There was no telling how long it would take...for everything to resolve. But he remained determined. And hopeful...Even after it was all over...he never told anyone." Tuininga emphasizes some of the risk Marco took on to support his neighbors and the time he committed during their detentions.

For this response option, identify a time in your life when you dedicated your talent and time to the quiet support of someone else or a cause. Describe how you made the decision to commit your support, the challenges or risks you encountered, and how you maintained your sense of determination and hope through the challenges.

Consider the following when planning your essay, video, or graphic panel response:

- Describe the specific situation you encountered. What (or who) were the challenges or the risk you faced? What approaches helped you to find the determination and hope to sustain your efforts?
- What was the value of your quiet service and courage?

Option 2

In reflecting on quiet acts of service, courage, and hope, Tuininga emphasizes the thoughtfulness with which Marco approached his efforts. For example, he quietly involved other community members with expertise and made sure his efforts were lawful.

For this response option, choose someone you know who has also demonstrated thoughtfulness and courage, as they quietly advocated for others. How did or does this person engage in their acts of service without drawing attention to themselves? Describe the value of their efforts to those they served. What contributions do their advocacy and service make? What difference does the quietness of their advocacy and service make in these contributions?

Consider the following when outlining your essay, video, or graphic panel response:

- Identify the individual's specific quiet acts of service and advocacy. What was their approach?
- Who or what factored into their thoughtful decision to engage in their efforts? How did their efforts quietly advocate and service others?

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 be submitted to by your first-year experience course instructor, 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, video, or graphic panel response through the Onboarding Checklist in Canvas by Monday, September 7.

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

Sammy Grimaldi, First Year Experience Coordinator
(207) 859-1141
sam.grimaldi@thomas.edu

She will be happy to help you in any way she can.

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

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