



THOMAS

Common Read 2017

Instructions

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

After reading and reflecting on this year's selection, *Until We Are Free*, we'd ask you to create a written response from one of the options listed below. During Fall Orientation, you will have an opportunity to discuss what you have written along with other students in your class.

Option 1

In her story, Shirin Ebadi describes a path of extraordinary courage in the face of overwhelming pressure. Despite all the challenges to her personal and her professional identity, however, she never surrenders to those barriers. She writes, "Being crushed simply gives you greater exercise in collecting the shards of yourself, putting them back together, and figuring out what to do next" (67).

For this writing option, identify a time in your life when you faced some kind of adversity, some kind of challenge to your values and your identity. How did you respond? And when the situation was resolved, how did you "put yourself together" and figure out what to do next? What part of yourself was confirmed? Was your path forward changed in any way as a result?

Consider the following when outlining your essay:

- Identify the specific situation, challenge or event that you faced. What part of your identity, what perspective or value in your life, was called into question?
 - Think about how you responded. What value or quality about yourself did you find confirmed in the process? Was your path forward changed—or not?
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Option 2

As she considers the impact of her resistance to the regime in Iran on her life and her family, Ebadi relates the story of a young man imprisoned for his beliefs. After being released from prison, he wrote "I learned that we create ourselves" (122). Even as she acknowledges the impact of the society around her, Ebadi's work claims that we create our own response to the challenges we face.

For this writing option, identify a time when a challenge or event has had a significant impact on your life. Describe the difference between your life or your perspective before and after the event. How has your life changed? How did this time provide you with the opportunity to "create yourself"?

Consider the following when outlining your essay:

- What was the specific challenge or situation you faced? How did you respond?
- How has your life changed as a result? What is different, and what has remained constant for you?

(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 this will be the first example of your writing skills for your instructor for your First-Year Experience course, you should demonstrate your understanding of appropriate sentence structure, grammar, punctuation and word choice.

Please return your essay by Friday, August 4th to

Dr. Thomas Edwards
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Email: edwardst@thomas.edu

If you email your essay, please save it as a Microsoft Word or “rtf” (rich text format) document.

If you have any questions about the Common Read project, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Edwards or Debbie Cunningham, Vice President of Student Success. Debbie’s telephone number and email address are (207) 859-1297 and retdean@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!