About the Common Book and Author

Otterbein’s Common Book Program, one of the University’s signature programs, offers a shared reading experience for all incoming first-year students, and for faculty, staff, and other members of the Otterbein community.

Sam Quinones, the author of this year’s Common Book, *Dreamland: The True Tale of America’s Opiate Epidemic*, has been a producer of punk rock bands, a guitarist, and an English teacher. For thirty years, he has worked as a journalist, and he has written two other books of narrative nonfiction. In 2018, three years after the publication of *Dreamland*, Quinones testified about the opioid crisis before the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. To learn more about Quinones, his investigative reporting, and his approach to storytelling, go to his website: www.samquinones.com

To help you navigate the complex story of *Dreamland*, and to experience an Otterbein class, listen to the advice Dr. Daugherty offered to her class when she taught *Dreamland*: https://us-lti.bbcollab.com/recording/652703893aeb4f65ba4744c6124cac81

In *Dreamland*, Quinones chronicles the spread of addiction, from the pills that led to black tar heroin, across the United States. In an article for the *New York Times*, Quinones wrote, “Traveling the country to write a book chronicling this story, I was struck by how much agony we create in pursuit of numbed pain.” See the map after the Contents page for the specific locations where heroin cells worked.
Respond to the prompt below in an essay unified by a clear thesis or central idea.

What are the forces, the causal threads, which converged to create the opioid crisis? Identify at least three or four of those forces: they may be economic, physical, medical, psychological, legal or political; or you might identify forces other than those listed here. Trace the origins and impact of the forces you choose, using the various threads that Quinones investigated. You might also consider whether or not those same forces have been or can be used to mitigate, or even reverse, the damage done by opioid addiction.

Be sure to analyze and not summarize, or simply re-tell the story, in your essay. Support your thesis with specific evidence from the book, including at least three but no more than five brief quotations. Cite pages for all quotations, and include a Work Cited entry, which you’ll find on page 4, Document Design. Respond as a thoughtful and critical reader, using only the book itself, no other sources. The articles and web sites included here are intended for class discussion or writing. Please read them if you’d like to know more, but they should not be included in this essay. Consult the Rubric for the Common Book Essay on page 5 for standards, and see the Document Design for formatting.

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Read the article Quinones wrote in The New York Times within days of the book’s release:
www.nytimes.com/2015/04/19/opinion/sunday/serving-all-your-heroin-needs.html
Wes Workman was a senior at Portsmouth High School when he died in 2008 from drug-related causes. His mother, Jo Anna Krohn, started SOLACE, Surviving Our Loss and Continuing Everyday. Like Wes' mother, the parents of Matt Schoonover of Columbus and Tyler Campbell of Pickerington, who lost their sons to addiction, established support groups for parents. See their work in memory of their children:


https://preventionactionalliance.org/about/matts-story/

https://tylerslight.com/

What have the state of Ohio and the city of Portsmouth done in response to the opioid epidemic?

Start Talking, a program begun by Gov. John Kasich and continued under Gov. DeWine, has supported a public conversation to combat drug abuse.

www.StartTalking.ohio.gov

Former Army Intelligence officer Dale King came back to Portsmouth and opened PSKC Crossfit, where he employs recovering addicts.

www.facebook.com/PortsmouthSpartanKettlebellClub/

Sole Choice in Portsmouth, once Mitchellace, the world’s largest shoelace manufacturer when Portsmouth was prosperous, is not only in business but is supplying pieces for masks to protect our frontline workers in the fight against the Coronavirus.

https://solechoice.yellowfivedesign.com/
Document Design Essays submitted to your professors should be written according to a standard format: font, spacing, margins, headings, page numbering, and documentation style are prescribed. The sample below illustrates these different features of an academic essay written according to MLA documentation style, 8th ed.

Last Name 1
Your Name
Professor ___
FYS 1000
18 August 2020
Your Title

Academic writing follows certain conventions. The font, spacing, margins, and placement of headings and page numbers you select affect the appearance of your essay, which should be consistent from page to page and from paper to paper, and which should be appropriate to the assignment. Established rules dictate these matters of form to help make your essay not only clear and readable but also professional.

Some rules apply to type font, spacing, and indenting. A standard font is the one used here, Garamond, and the font size is usually 12 pt. Margins should be one inch at the top, bottom, left, and right of each page. Essays should be double-spaced. When you begin a new paragraph, tab, or indent the first word five spaces.

A major concern in an academic essay is correct incorporation and citation of quotations. Carefully selected quotations demonstrate your knowledge of the text. For instance, you might write:

Quinones explains the deadly effects of addiction. He writes, “The morphine molecule exerts . . . brainwashing on humans, pushing them to act contrary to their self-interest in pursuit of the molecule. Addicts betray loved ones, steal, live under freeways in harsh weather, and run similarly horrific risks to use the molecule” (39).

A few words from a quotation may be enough to illustrate your idea. You may want to use a longer quotation occasionally, but try not to overload your essay with quotations. Your ideas and analysis are most important; quotations are evidence in support of those ideas.

Work Cited
An effective essay demonstrates the following characteristics:

1. The introduction effectively introduces the book and engages the reader.
2. The thesis clearly presents the main idea of the essay.
3. The essay is an analysis, not just a summary, with reasons supporting the thesis clearly presented in topic sentences, and with each reason defended with clear and appropriate evidence from the book.
4. The essay is organized and unified. The writer develops ideas logically, making appropriate and effective connections between them.
5. Supporting paragraphs are illustrated with specific support from the book (summary, paraphrase, and at least 3 direct quotations).
6. Quotations are carefully chosen and used judiciously, appropriately introduced and punctuated, and correctly cited.
7. The Work Cited entry is complete and correct.
8. Sentences are varied in length and structure.
9. The writing is economical. Word choice is precise.
10. The writer is consistent in tense, number, and person. Mechanics, usage and grammar are standard. The essay has been carefully proofread.

**Important Dates, Fall 2020**

Your essay will be the first writing that you submit to your FYS faculty. Bring a printed copy of your essay to First Flight. The printed copy of your assignment will be collected and discussed during your FYS course meetings on Thursday, August 20 and Friday, August 21, 2020.

First Flight: August 19 – 23
Classes begin: Monday, August 24
Author Visit: October 27-28
Common Book Convocation: Tues., Oct. 27, 3 PM in Cowan Hall

**FAQs**

How long should the essay be? About 750-1,000 words, or 3-4 pages, typed and double-spaced.

What if I don’t take my FYS until spring? Your essay will be collected at First Flight and given to your FYS instructor.

Who reads my essay? Your FYS instructor, who might grade your essay, use your writing to begin discussion of the book, or simply offer comments.

Other questions? Contact Regina Kengla at rkengla@otterbein.edu.

**Rubric**
Aggressive Reading

Reading at the college level can be demanding, and this is certainly true of Dreamland, demanding both cognitively and emotionally. As a college student, you can expect more reading, reading that challenges your thinking, reading that broadens your view of the world, reading that transforms you. If you are going to read effectively at the college level, you cannot be passive; you must be a proactive reader and interact with your text. To help you become that successful, aggressive reader, we recommend this strategy:

Locate: Choose a time when and a place where you are alert and focused.

Survey: Look at chapter titles, and in textbooks, section headings, intros, topic sentences, words in bold type, graphics.

Question: Read your text with your assignment, your prompt, or your research question in mind. Answer and respond as you read.

Now, read: Armed with a view of the layout of the text and with questions you’re reading to answer, read in chunks of 10 pages. Try to read 100 pages at a sitting. Your reading will be more efficient.

Write: Yes, write as you read—annotate, or take notes in the margins. Use a pen, not a highlighter, and write in the margins: ask questions, circle unfamiliar words, connect with prior knowledge or with other parts of the text, list names, and underline key passages.

Annotations work in the present, to help you engage with the text, and in the future, when you’ll review for a test or collect information for a paper.

Outline or Summarize: Outlining as you read helps you situate what you’re reading in a larger context of information. Summarizing after you read a chapter, using your own words, is a good measure of your understanding of the text.

Journal: To help you read Quinones’ book actively and productively, follow Dr. D’s advice and keep a reading journal in which you note observations, reflections, and questions as you read, pausing to write every so often. Summarize events, record images, trace patterns, find connections, describe significant persons, and explain relationships. Keeping the journal should help you to interact with the text, enhancing your understanding of the book and your ability to retain information. The journal serves as a record of your reading that can be useful in class discussions, assignments, and program events during the author’s visit. The reading journal can also serve as a reference for the essay that you write and bring to First Flight.

The story of Portsmouth continues, and not without setbacks. To learn more about both the achievements and the challenges Portsmouth still faces, read the articles listed on the attached Word doc.

https://www.facebook.com/PortsmouthSpartanKettlebellClub/

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Many thanks to Dr. Beth Daugherty and Dr. Paul Eisenstein for their invaluable help.