



## the 2021 Common Book

### Contents

- About the Common Book Authors 1
- Common Book Assignment, Rubric 2
- Document Design 3
- illustrations from Gapminder.org 4-5
- Important Dates 5
- Frequently Asked Questions 5
- Aggressive Reading 6

"One of the most important books I've ever read—an indispensable guide to thinking clearly about the world." —Bill Gates

# FACTFULNESS



Ten Reasons  
We're Wrong About  
the World—and Why  
Things Are Better  
Than You Think

Hans Rosling with Ola Rosling and  
Anna Rosling Rönnlund

### About the Common Book Authors



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.

The 2021 Common Book was written by Swedish physician and academic Hans Rosling, who collaborated with his son Ola and daughter-in-law Anna to write *Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong about the World—and Why Things Are Better than You Think*, published after his death in 2017. In *Factfulness*, the Roslings argue against assumptions that we make based on preconceived

“instincts,” and they outline the instincts that prevent us from recognizing facts. The authors conclude that our resulting negative view of the world—poverty, natural disaster, the environment—can be corrected and made more positive if we recognize our biases (our instincts) and respond with logic.

### ***Common Book Assignment***

Respond to this prompt in an essay of multiple paragraphs:

In *Factfulness*, the authors identify ten instincts, or predispositions in our thinking, that lead us to reach the wrong conclusions. Select three of those instincts, explain them in your own words, and provide examples of how each instinct you've chosen has affected your own thinking or the thinking of someone you've observed or read about.

**Rubric** A well-written 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 relevant 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 evidence 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.

**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, 8<sup>th</sup> ed.

1" margins, top and bottom, left and right

Your Name

Professor \_\_\_\_

FYS 1000

18 August 2021

Last Name 1

Insert page number. Then double-click and add your last name, which will appear with the appropriate number on every page.

Center your title

Use a standard font, 12 pt

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.

Double space the entire essay. Note that there is no extra space in the heading, after the title, or between paragraphs.

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:

Rosling encourages us to consider both statistics and stories. He writes, "The world cannot be understood without numbers. And it cannot be understood with numbers alone" (128).

Include the page of the quotation in parentheses. Use no other abbreviations or punctuation. Note that the period follows.

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

At the end of your essay, provide a Work Cited entry to credit your source. Note that this is MLA, 8<sup>th</sup> edition.

Rosling, Hans, et al. *Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong about the World—and Why Things Are Better than You Think*. Flatiron Books, 2018.



*This graphic from Gapminder illustrates the instincts that Factfulness explains. Gapminder was founded by the Roslings in 2005. Their stated mission:*

*“Gapminder identifies systematic misconceptions about important global trends and proportions and uses reliable data to develop easy to understand teaching materials to rid people of their misconceptions.”*

*([gapminder.org/about](http://gapminder.org/about))*



*A Practical Guide to Critical Thinking: This graphic equips you with “commandments” to counter the dramatic instincts illustrated on the preceding page. (www.gapminder.org)*

## 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 Colette Masterson:**  
***cmasterson@otterbein.edu***

## Important Dates, Fall 2021

**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**:  
 FYS Meeting 1 - August 19  
 FYS Meeting 2 - August 20

**First Flight:** August 18 – 22  
**Classes begin:** Monday, August 23, 2021  
**Author virtual Visit:** October 25 - 27  
**Common Book Convocation:** Tues., Oct. 26

## Aggressive Reading

Reading at the college level can be demanding, and this is certainly true of *Factfulness*. 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, 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.

**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 high-lighter, 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 the Common Book actively and productively, 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 new ideas. 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 Common Book Program is made possible by a generous gift  
from Mary B. Thomas, Class of 1928.*

*Our gratitude to Beth and Gary Daugherty for their gift to the Thomas Endowment.*