

**Course:** WRIT 101  
**Term:** Fall 2020  
**Section:** Remote 6

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## WRIT 101 Common Reading Assignment Sheet

This assignment emphasizes the critical reading, critical thinking, analysis, and synthesis skills that are vital to college writing. First, you will work in groups to create study guides and lead class discussion on a section of this year's common reading text, Mona Hanna-Attisha's *What the Eyes Don't See: A Story of Crisis, Resistance, and Hope in an American City*. Then, you will compose an essay that integrates detailed information from the book with your ideas about the issues that it addresses.

### Assignment Description

#### *Study Guides & Class Discussion*

For the first part of the assignment, you will create a two-page study guide for the five or six chapters of the text that I assign to their group. These study guides define key words and phrases, list specific housing issues or laws contained in your section, include short summaries of each chapter, and offer discussion questions about your group's section of *Evicted*.

Then, your group will use these study guides to lead a 20-minute discussion (not deliver a lecture) on the section that you were assigned. We will all have read these chapters, so there is no reason to provide an in-depth summary as in a book report. Follow these general guidelines when creating your study guide:

1. Identify your group members and the sections of *What the Eyes Don't See* assigned to your group.
2. List and define key terms or concepts from each chapter.
3. Describe the focus of each chapter in a couple sentences.
4. Provide an example from each chapter that illustrates the main issues or ideas covered in it.
5. Write a question for each chapter that could serve as an essay prompt.
6. Design your study guide so the information is accessible and clear.

In terms of leading a productive discussion, creating good questions is key. Your questions should help clarify ideas from the book and encourage other students to engage with these ideas. As you formulate these questions, try to anticipate class members' responses, and be prepared with follow-up questions. During the discussion, **encourage class members to voice different opinions** rather than simply supplying the "right" answer.

#### *Essays*

These study guides and class discussions help prepare you to write an essay about *What the Eyes Don't See*. For the essay, you will be able to choose **one** of the following prompts:

1. After Mona Hanna-Attisha's barbeque and her revealing conversation with her friend Elin Betzano, Hanna-Attisha stays up late researching lead in water. She is angry and scared but says she knew she "needed to stay calm ... needed to be strategic and careful" (68). Why does she decide she needs to be calm and strategic? Read over "Why Am I So Angry, and What Can I Do About It?" (pp. 163-71) in *The Writer's Practice*, and then identify one specific part of *What the Eyes Don't See* that makes you angry or upset. Then, as Warner suggests, write an analytical argument about the problem and consider why approaching it calmly and strategically might be more beneficial than being angry. Is the problem one that impacts Oxford or your home

community? If so, what role could you play in addressing the problem? If not, how could you still get involved? How is writing about a problem beneficial? Cite specifics from the text.

2. After reading *What the Eyes Don't See*, we know that Mona Hanna-Attisha helped expose the Flint water crisis and provided help for the children she treats and all of the people in Flint. So, what is her purpose in writing the book? Read over "Reading Like a Writer" in *The Writer's Practice* (pp. 35-40). Then, consider some of the terms Warner uses in that section: genre, purpose, audience, message, etc. How do they apply to *What the Eyes Don't See*? Why? Compose a thesis-driven essay in which you analyze the genre, purpose, audience, message, and goals of *What the Eyes Don't See*. Is the purpose just to highlight what happened in Flint? Is it larger? Who might read a book like this one outside of a school assignment? Why? Are there social benefits to books like this one? Why? Be sure to cite from the text.
3. Many of the people in *What the Eyes Don't See* face ethical dilemmas. Think about some of the people in the book and their ethical situations. Also, read "What's the Right Thing to Do?" in *The Writer's Practice* (pp. 69-74), and consider Sally's situation. Then, select a person in the book to analyze more closely, and compare and contrast the situation with Sally's. Finally, compose a thesis-driven essay in which you consider what each person should do and why. Are the situations black and white? Why, or why not? What bigger picture complications exist, and why do they matter? Who is impacted directly and indirectly? Why? Try to bring the situations together so that you have one focused idea that encompasses both people. Be sure to cite specifics from the text.

Remember, the purpose of your essay is to illustrate your critical engagement with ideas in the text, not to simply to summarize the book. In class, we will discuss strategies for responding to essay prompts and strategies for synthesizing ideas from multiple texts. We will also discuss different methods for structuring academic essays, as well as what it means to write for academic audiences. You will be required to submit a draft essay for peer review feedback. After you receive this feedback, you will have a chance to revise your essay before submitting it for a grade.

## Learning Objective

The learning objective for this assignment is to practice critical reading and thinking as well as to practice responding to the kinds of essay prompts that you will find in an academic setting.

## Process

In this assignment, you will employ the following process to write your common reading essay:

1. Read *What the Eyes Don't See*.
2. Work with your group to create your study guide, develop class discussion questions, and lead class discussions.
3. Choose the essay prompt that you will respond to.
4. Use the study guides from your group or others to outline your response.
5. Use your outline to draft a complete essay.
6. Give one another feedback on your essay drafts.
7. Revise your essay, and submit it for a grade.

## Logistics

- Minimum 1000 words
- MLA format throughout (heading, pagination, margins and spacing, citations, etc.)
- Submit your essay draft and revised essay via assignment links in Blackboard.

## Grading

The Common Reading Essay is worth 20% of your overall grade for the course. That 20% breaks down as follows:

Study Guide & Discussion Leader Session	25%
Essay Draft	25%
Revised Essay	50%

The My Grades section of Blackboard takes these weighted values into consideration when presenting your grade for the project and for the course.

Common Reading Calendar		
Dates	Class	Homework
Week 10 10/26-11/1	Common Reading Assignment Introduction	<b>Blackboard: Revised Draft Due 11/1</b> Read: <i>What the Eyes Don't See</i> , pp.
Week 11 11/2-11/8	Reading Critically & Responding to Essay Prompts	Read: <i>What the Eyes Don't See</i> , pp. Blackboard: Study Guides Due: 11/9
Week 12 11/9-11/15	Discussion Leader Activities	Read: <i>What the Eyes Don't See</i> , pp. Blackboard: Common Reading Essay Draft Due 11/15
Week 13 11/16-11/17	Peer Review, Revising Your Common Reading Essay & Course Recap	Blackboard: Revised Essay Due 11/22 Blog: Course Reflection Due 11/24

Name:

### WRIT 101 Common Reading Essay Rubric

#### 1. Purposes and Audience

*Does the writer respond directly to one prompt? Does the essay demonstrate a sense that the writer is aware of their audience and make sufficient efforts to maintain an erudite tone appropriate to the genre?*

A Excellent	B Exceeds Expectations	C Meets Assignment Expectations	D Insufficient	F Failure
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#### 2. Exploration and Argumentation

*Does the essay contain a clear, original thesis that is maintained throughout the text? Does the essay structure cohere, employing transitions and topic sentences and providing a conclusion that extends rather than simply restates their argument?*

A	B	C	D	F
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#### 3. Research

*Does the essay provide a thesis and support this thesis with a sufficient amount of logical and relevant evidence from *What the Eyes Don't See* and/or additional source material? Does this support use quotation, paraphrasing, and summary to demonstrate engagement with the prompt and with the texts?*

A	B	C	D	F
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#### 4. Writing Process/Style

*Is the essay organized, demonstrating cohesion, clarity, conciseness, and other elements of style? Does the essay demonstrate a recursive process that includes brainstorming, planning, drafting, reviewing, revising, editing, and proofreading?*

A	B	C	D	F
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#### 5. Conventions and Mechanics

*Is the writing free of grammatical and mechanical errors that inhibit or interfere with the reader's understanding? Does the writing follow conventions for documentation, formatting, and length requirements? Did the student submit all required parts of the assignment?*

A	B	C	D	F
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If you earn a grade of "D" (65-69) or "F" (<65), consider scheduling a conference with your teacher.