

Advanced Creative Writing  
Summer Assignment

John Green's *The Anthropocene Reviewed*—Creative Nonfiction Essay

From *The Anthropocene Reviewed* website:

“The Anthropocene is the current geologic age, in which humans have profoundly reshaped the planet and its biodiversity. In this remarkable symphony of essays adapted and expanded from his groundbreaking podcast, bestselling author John Green reviews different facets of the human-centered planet on a five-star scale—from the QWERTY keyboard and sunsets to Canada geese and *Penguins of Madagascar*.”

Directions:

Read/listen to at least three of John Green's essays. They can be found wherever podcasts are downloaded as *The Anthropocene Reviewed*. Additionally, you can pick up a copy of the collected essays, also titled *The Anthropocene Reviewed*. Finally, I've included a link at the bottom that will take you to several podcast episodes *and* transcripts of the episodes. Pick whichever ones sound appealing to you. I particularly liked his essays on *Super Mario Kart*, Googling Strangers, and Diet Dr. Pepper.

While you won't need to mimic Green's voice or style, I *am* asking you to utilize his structure, so pay attention to the way he organizes his essays. Notice the way that he does not try to be objective. In fact, he talks explicitly about personal experiences in his reviews, allowing his biases to color the rating at the end of his review.

Assignment:

1. After reading and taking notes on three or four (or more!) of John Green's essays from the book or the podcast, write your own review that could be featured in the book.
2. Choose anything you are interested in writing about, then take a mental stroll with it. Like Green does, choose something that you can research and identify with on a personal level that will also make a larger statement about humanity and/or life today. For example, Green wrote about Diet Dr. Pepper to comment on man's innovation. He wrote about the QWERTY keyboard to comment on man's collaboration. He wrote about *Super Mario Kart* to comment on fairness and equity.
3. Use John Green's structure: historical info/context, personal connection, a larger statement about humanity, and a final star ranking (“I give Indianapolis four stars”).
4. **Note that you will be reading your piece to the class** in one of our first lessons, so be sure that you are comfortable sharing whatever you end up writing. This will be a means of getting to know our classmates through their written work, so consider choosing a topic through which you can express important aspects of yourself.
5. If you are retaking this course as an independent study, please write a brand new review. Please do not recycle your previous submission. Maybe you even feel like being meta and writing a review of the class itself...

Your essay should include the following:

1. Historical Info/Context—The essay gives the reader the background they need to understand your topic. Cite your sources within the text. (Example: According to the website “All You Need To Know about Pepsi”...)
2. Personal Connection—The essay gives your reader an anecdote that reveals your personal association or experience with the topic.
3. Larger Statement About Humanity—Your topic inspires a statement or observation about humanity or life today that you explore in your essay. Be direct and specific with your observation. For example, “Tater tots are essential to the human experience, and humans should endeavor to keep them on the menu at Sonic because...”
4. Thesis and Star Review—The essay ends on a star review that corresponds and/or supports the ideas within the essay. The star review is essentially the essay’s thesis.

Grammar and Mechanics—The essay contains minimal errors in punctuation, capitalization, and grammar, so as not to distract the reader from your ideas.

Length—The essay is roughly 1000-1500 words.

In addition to listening to the podcast through traditional delivery methods, you can listen to several episodes and/or read the transcripts from this website:

<https://nerdfighteria.info/c/theanthropocenereviewed/>