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## Johnston Public Library Book Discussion Questions

### **The Anthropocene Reviewed** by John Green

#### Summary

The Anthropocene is the current geologic age, in which humans have profoundly reshaped the planet and its biodiversity. In this remarkable symphony of essays, bestselling author John Green reviews different facets of the human-centered planet on a five-star scale -- from QWERTY keyboard and sunsets to Canada geese and Penguins of Madagascar. Funny, complex, and rich with detail, the reviews chart the contradictions of contemporary humanity. John Green's gift for storytelling shines throughout this masterful collection. This is an open-hearted exploration of the paths we forge and an unironic celebration of falling in love with the world.

#### Essays

- "You'll never walk alone"
- Humanity's temporal range
- Halley's comet
- Our capacity for wonder
- Lascaux cave paintings
- Scratch 'n' sniff stickers
- Diet Dr Pepper
- Velociraptors
- Canada geese
- Teddy bears
- The hall of presidents
- Air-conditioning
- Staphylococcus aureus
- The internet
- Academic decathlon
- Sunsets
- Jerzy Dudek's performance on May 25, 2005
- Penguins of Madagascar
- Piggly Wiggly
- The Nathan's famous hot dog eating contest
- CNN
- Harvey
- The yips
- Auld lang syne
- Googling strangers
- Indianapolis
- Kentucky bluegrass
- The Indianapolis 500
- Monopoly
- Super Mario kart
- Bonneville salt flats
- Hiroyuki Doi's circle drawings
- Whispering
- Viral meningitis
- Plague
- Wintry mix
- The hot dogs of Bæjarins Beztu Pylsur
- The notes app
- The mountain goats
- The QWERTY keyboard
- The world's largest ball of paint
- Sycamore trees
- "New partner"
- Three farmers on their way to a dance
- Postscript
- Post-postscript
- The orbital sunrise
- The ginkgo tree

## Discussion Questions

1. *Anthropocene* - relating to or denoting the current geological age, viewed as the period during which human activity has been the dominant influence on climate and the environment.

What do you think of the title? Is it fitting? Was the book what you expected based on this title? Why or why not?

2. Out of 5★ how do you rate Green's star ratings and why? Out of 5★s how did you rate *The Anthropocene Reviewed*? Why?

3. Green concludes with the question, "How have you enjoyed the Anthropocene so far?" What is your answer?

4. What was your favorite essay? What are your favorite quotes?

5. Many of these essays first appeared on the podcast *The Anthropocene Reviewed*, in the PBS Digital series *The Art Assignment*, or on the YouTube channel vlogbrothers. The author also narrated the audiobook version of the essays. Have you listened to any of the above? Did you prefer consuming these short essays via audio or reading them? How did you consume them – several at a time or individually?

6. *The Anthropocene Reviewed* is about reviewing what it means to be a human. Think about an experience you have had that has greatly impacted your life. How would you review it in the same manner John Green does in his book?

7. *Bonneville Salt Flats* is a story about a lake that transformed into salt flats. Think about all of the different iterations of yourself and the path that brought you to this place. Knowing everything you know now, what would you tell the younger version(s) of yourself?

8. *Scratch 'n' Sniff Stickers* is a story about childhood longing. Think about the nostalgia of home. Is there something in your life that transports you back to a specific space and time?

9. What is on your bucket list, comparable to the once-in-a-lifetime experience of seeing *Halley's Comet*?

10. *Auld Lang Syne* is a story about longing for something in the past. What in your life would you miss if it were no longer there?

Summary from the publisher's description.

Discussion Questions adapted from the *University of Mississippi Common Reading Experience Resource Guide* and a Reddit discussion of the book.