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English Language
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Supplement to *When Breath Becomes Air*

created by

The Vanderbilt University English Language Center

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What is our Supplement to *When Breath Becomes Air*?

This guide was created for incoming undergraduate students at Vanderbilt University who use English as an Additional Language (EAL). Our Supplement to *When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi¹ has two goals:

- to help you read texts about unfamiliar topics
- to help you internalize relevant themes from *When Breath Becomes Air*

First, we include several tools to equip you for a more complete understanding of the text:




- **reading strategies:** develops skills such as building background knowledge, previewing, and skimming
- **recognizing organizational elements:** explores skills for reading accuracy and comprehension, including sections about literary devices, technical terminology, and literary references
- **Kalanithi's writing style:** identifies literary devices and how they can enhance your reading experience
- **Applying Kalanithi's advice:** guides reflection on how your background and interests can enhance your campus experiences

The second goal, internalizing relevant themes from *When Breath Becomes Air*, is more difficult to achieve. We focus the supplement on recognizing and interpreting organizational elements in *When Breath Becomes Air*, and we hope this helps you read more quickly and accurately. In turn, this may help clarify complex issues raised in your classes and [Vanderbilt Visions group](#) and even improve your persuasive and analytical writing during your first year at Vanderbilt.

Find this supplement online [here](#) or by copying and pasting this URL:

<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/elc/resources/supplement-to-when-breath-becomes-air/>

Use the tools pictured below to help as you read:

 <p>Want to Know More?</p>	<p>Expand your knowledge with links to online resources in these boxes.</p>
 <p>Focus on...²</p>	<p>Complete activities to further your understanding by following the directions in these boxes.</p>
 <p>Notice...</p>	<p>Consider details not immediately apparent from examples or explanations.</p>

¹ *When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi, 2016, Random House. This supplement is based on the Kindle Edition.

² Target Icon adapted from <http://webicons.png.com/icon/78516>

When Breath Becomes Air at Vanderbilt University

Vanderbilt actively supports and seeks to create equity, diversity, and inclusion across campus to offer a sense of support and belonging for all its community members. The university has created the Office for Inclusive Excellence (OIE)³ to help us our campus community focus on these themes.

To this end, the Ingram Commons has a yearly reading that all incoming undergraduates read to prompt conversation and reflection on these values. The theme for the 2021–2022 academic year is “Telling Our Stories.” As Dean of The Ingram Commons Melissa Gresalfi stated, this choice highlights, “an effort to both connect students to each other and to offer an opportunity for our community to acknowledge the challenges and hardships that are part of growth and change.” The university has chosen *When Breath Becomes Air* as the [Commons Reading](#) so that you and your peers can more fully participate in the ongoing conversation about community, resilience, diversity, and inclusion at Vanderbilt University.

At the English Language Center (ELC), we want to help create pathways for students who want to know more about U.S. culture or who are speaking English as an additional language to more fully engage in these campus-wide conversations. We have created this Supplement to *When Breath Becomes Air* to support your reading by looking at U.S. cultural and language references not clarified directly in the book.

We hope this strategy of identifying and clarifying cultural and linguistic cues can both enhance your reading experience for this book and model a reading approach you can use to enrich your reading comprehension and accuracy through awareness of cultural perspectives.

 <p>Want to Know More? ELC Online Resources</p>	<p>The ELC Resources page offers a host of downloadable guides to support your participation in campus life, including an Academic Vocabulary Guide, Email Messages Guide, and How to Avoid Plagiarism tutorial.</p>
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Reading Strategies

Building Background Knowledge

Before you read *When Breath Becomes Air*, consider what you know about the book’s major topic, what makes life worth living, and its themes of morality, love, identity, resilience, and facing death. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Have you studied these topics previously?
- What can you remember about these topics?
- What is your understanding of these topics?

Consult the following websites to build upon your current background knowledge:

<i>When Breath Becomes Air</i> Media	Medical School in the U.S.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character Map • Lucy Kalanithi TEDMED Talk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Timeline of American Medical Education • Guide to the U.S. Doctor Hierarchy

³ [Office of Inclusive Excellence Website](#), Retrieved 2021
[The Vanderbilt University English Language Center](#)

Understanding the Book Title

The full book title is, *When Breath Becomes Air: What Makes Life Worth Living in the Face of Death*. There are two parts of this title that illuminate Kalanithi’s perspective:

1. Kalanithi’s background in and passion for literature is unmistakably present in the title, as it is inspired by a poem called [Caelica 83](#), included on in the epigraph⁴ (a quote shared before a book or chapter begins to help us understand the author’s perspective). This reference is a clue that Kalanithi uses many metaphors and literary references to tell his story.
2. The subtitle, “What Makes Life Worth Living in the Face of Death” names Paul Kalanithi’s mission in life. He seeks the answer to this question starting in young adulthood and shares his story with the world in an effort to help us find our own understanding.


His book can help us reflect on what is most important to us, how we wish to spend our time, and how we want to tell our stories to ourselves and each other.

 <p>Want to Know More?</p>	<p>This Oprah Winfrey Network SuperSoul Short offers a helpful overview of the book’s central themes and includes short video clips of Kalanithi and his family.</p>
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Full Content Overview

When Breath Becomes Air is a **memoir**, which means it focuses on true events that occurred during part of the author’s life. Kalanithi splits these life events into 2 parts:

1. Part I: In Perfect Health I Begin: This part describes Kalanithi’s experiences from his childhood through completing his residency (general doctor training).
2. Part II: Cease Not till Death: This part describes the time from Kalanithi’s initial diagnosis until his death.

 <p>Want to Know More? Timeline</p>	<p>If you would like to visualize the events Kalanithi describes, you can view this timeline of the memoir.</p>
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Reading these summaries does not offer the full experience of reading the book complete with detailed examples and stories. We recommend using these resources to support your experience while reading the book

Hospital References

As you read, check the list below to learn more about references and acronyms with definitions distinct to North American hospital settings. They are listed in order of appearance with the page number when they first appear.

- **Scrubs:** protective cotton pants and shirts doctors and nurses wear (p. 3)
- **White coats:** a traditional coat worn to identify doctors. Medical students wear a short coat, and attendings wear a long coat (p. 3)
- **MRI:** magnetic resonance imaging (p. 4)
- **Attending:** a fully trained physician who often supervises medical students in training (p. 10)
- **OR:** the Operating Room is where surgical operations are performed (p. 13)
- **Pre-lab:** tests completed before a procedure to make sure the patient is approved for care (p. 48)

⁴ *When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi, 2016, Random House, Kindle Edition, Epigraph: p. ix.
[The Vanderbilt University English Language Center](#)

- **Neonatal:** describes a baby in the first 4 months after it is born (p. 58)
- **ICU:** the Intensive Care Unit is where critically ill patients are treated (p. 58)
- **Post-op:** postoperative (after surgery) (p. 74)
- **Chemo:** short for [chemotherapy](#), a common type of cancer treatment (p. 95)

Thinking Before You Read: Previewing the Text

Before reading each section in *When Breath Becomes Air*, browse through it. Ask yourself:

- How many pages do I need to read?
- How long will it take to read?

Knowing the approximate length of the parts will help you be realistic about the time you will need to read them.⁵ Also, because this text is structured in two halves, knowing whether you are at the beginning, middle, or end of each half will help you know where you are in the story (see the [Full Content Overview](#) for more details).

Skimming for Background Information

Before reading *When Breath Becomes Air*, it is helpful to glance through the pages and focus on the important parts to better understand what the text is about.⁶ This practice is called **skimming**.

Ask yourself:

- What do the part titles mean?
- What are the keywords in each title?
- What will each part's content be?

For example, by looking at the Table of Contents, you can see that the book is split into two parts. The key words in the first part's title are **perfect health** and **begin**. The key words in the second part's title are **cease not** and **death**. From these titles, we can infer that the first half of the book is about Kalanithi's life before he is gravely ill, and the second half focuses on his illness and death.



Want to Know More? Reading Efficiently

The ELC has published a [Scholarly Reading Guide](#) to help you better read and comprehend scholarly texts, such as peer-reviewed journal articles. If you would like to review the information about skimming and scanning, click here to read the section titled, [Reading Efficiently](#).



Focus on Reading Skills

You can also consult these reading textbooks for more information and practice:

- *Academic Reading: A Content-based Approach* by Holschuh & Kelley, 1988
- *Ready to Read More* by Blanchard & Root, 2006
- *A Good Read: Developing Strategies for Effective Reading* by Islam & Steenburgh, 2009

Identifying Important Terminology

Particularly in the first half of the memoir, Kalanithi includes medical terminology in explanations and dialogue. This language is likely included to portray those conversations realistically, as all the people in those conversations are medical experts. However, it can be difficult for readers to decide whether to look up these terms.

⁵ *Academic Reading: A Content-based Approach* by Holschuh & Kelley, 1988, Palgrave Macmillan, p. 2

⁶ *Academic Reading: A Content-based Approach* by Holschuh & Kelley, 1988, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 2–3

Ask yourself: Do I need to understand this word or phrase to comprehend the passage? First, continue reading and see if you can understand what is happening before pausing your reading to check a dictionary.



Focus on Terminology

Let's look at some example quotes. For which quote(s) might you need to look up the bolded terms in a dictionary to fully understand the passage? Then check your ideas against the explanation provided below.

Example 1: I lay down on a hard bench in the waiting area, feeling my back muscles contort, breathing to control the pain—the ibuprofen wasn't touching this—and naming each muscle as it spasmed to stave off tears: **erector spinae, rhomboid, latissimus, piriformis**...⁷

Example 2: Openness to human rationality does not mean revealing grand truths from the **apse**; it means meeting patients where they are, in the **narthex** or **nave**, and bringing them as far as you can.⁸

Example 3: He sliced confidently through the tough white **rectus fascia** covering the muscle, the split the **facia** and the underlying muscle with his hands, revealing the first glimpse of the melon-like uterus.⁹

Explanation:

Example 1: In this quote, you likely do not need to look up each medical term, as it is explained in the passage that Kalanithi is using these terms to help him escape the physical pain he is experiencing. The main idea is about his pain, and the definitions of these individual terms are unnecessary to understand the story.

Example 2: Without understanding the terms apse, narthex, or nave, it could be difficult to understand the meaning of this quote. Those terms are used as descriptors for how doctors can interact with patients, and looking them up reveals that they are names for different parts of a church building. They create a metaphor for Kalanithi's advice to speak to patients in plain language and help them with their emotional needs.

Example 3: In this quote, you likely do not need to look up each medical term, as the passage is describing the steps of a medical procedure. The main idea is about the confidence Kalanithi sees in the doctor's movements and the definitions of these individual terms are unnecessary to understand the passage.

In the next section about [Identifying In-text Definitions](#), we will review strategies to find definitions of terms embedded in the text.

⁷ *When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi, 2016, Random House, Kindle Edition, p. 10.

⁸ *When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi, 2016, Random House, Kindle Edition, p. 95.

⁹ *When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi, 2016, Random House, Kindle Edition, p. 57.

Identifying In-text Definitions

Because this book was written for a general audience, Kalanithi has included definitions for many difficult terms. Finding these definitions as you read will help you avoid looking up words in the dictionary, which increases your reading speed and flow. Also, dictionary definitions you find may not be helpful, as words often have more than one meaning and you will need a definition specific to the context of this book.

If you see an unfamiliar word, do not immediately stop reading. Instead, look for a definition in the text. Definitions can be spotted by paying attention to punctuation, synonyms, defining verbs such as “called” and “means,” and descriptions in surrounding sentences.¹⁰ See the table on the next page for examples.

As you keep reading, if you do not see a definition in the text, you can follow these steps:

1. Look for a [prefix](#) or [suffix](#) that might help you guess the meaning of the word and identify what part of speech (noun, verb, or adjective, etc.) the word has in the sentence.¹¹
2. If the meaning of the word is still unclear, you can search for the definition in a dictionary. The ELC recommends using an English–English dictionary (such as the [Oxford English Dictionary](#) or [Merriam Webster](#)) for more precise definitions of the word. Choose the definition that best fits the context and part of speech for the sentence you are reading. If you prefer simpler definitions, you can use a learner’s dictionary, for instance, the [Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries](#).
3. If you are using a digital book, some e-reader apps allow you to select a word in the text and see a definition. For example, in the Kindle app, a definition from the New Oxford American Dictionary will appear. However, some of the dictionary definitions may not fit the book’s context, so be sure to read each of the definitions carefully and choose the one that makes the most sense in the sentence. Also, keep in mind that some dictionary features do not work for multiple or hyphenated words.

¹⁰ *Ready to Read More* by Blanchard & Root, 2006, Pearson Longman, Chapter 3: Use Vocabulary Strategies

¹¹ *Academic Reading: A Content-based Approach* by Holschuh & Kelley, 1988, Palgrave Macmillan, p. 11



Focus on Identifying Definitions

Use the table below to help yourself identify definitions in *When Breath Becomes Air* without using a dictionary. Then you can fill in your own quotes and definitions from the text to guide your reading.

Term	Quote with a Definition	How I Recognized It
<i>giant aneurysms, intracerebral arterial bypasses, arteriovenous malformations</i>	p. 10: Thursday night slipped into Friday morning as I was caught in the operating room for thirty-six hours straight, in a series of deeply complex cases : giant aneurysms, intracerebral arterial bypasses, arteriovenous malformations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punctuation: colon
<i>austere diktats</i>	p. 19: When we did see him, he was an amalgam of sweet affections and austere diktats, hugs and kisses mixed with stony pronouncements ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition is found in synonyms: sweet affections = hugs and kisses; austere diktats = stony pronouncements
<i>prosopagnosia</i>	p. 45: I thought: <i>Prosopagnosia is a neurological disorder wherein one loses the ability to see faces.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition is in the sentence • Defining verb: is
<i>psychogenic syndrome</i>	p. 89: Sometimes the news so shocks the mind that the brain suffers an electrical short . This phenomenon is known as a “psychogenic” syndrome, a severe version of the swoon some experience after hearing bad news.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description surrounds the term



Notice: Definitions

When interpreting in-text definitions, you may not get an exact explanation as you would from a dictionary. However, a quick interpretation like those in the chart above allows you to continue comprehending the story and maintain your reading speed and flow. If you are interested in more detailed information, you can always choose to pause and look up definitions.

Identifying Literary References

Throughout the book, Kalanithi references literary works and philosophers to support his storytelling. He explains his approach: “I still felt literature provided the best account of the life of the mind, while neuroscience laid down the most elegant rules of the brain.” He uses his expertise in both literature and neuroscience throughout the story to explore the central question: What makes life worth living in the face of death?

Kalanithi often explains neuroscience terms to us, as you saw in the section about [identifying in-text definitions](#). However, rather than offer a definition of a famous author, he explains his ideas around literary references so that we can understand his point even if we have not read the original literary work he is referencing.

You can approach these moments like finding an in-text definition: identify clues in the text that reveal Kalanithi's main point. Even if you have not read the literary work(s) he is referring to, you can interpret the main point he is making and understand the larger passage.



Focus on
Literary
References

Let's look at some example quotes and see how they can be understood without recognizing the bolded literary reference.

“Meaning, while a slippery concept, seemed inextricable from human relationships and moral values. **T.S. Eliot's** *The Waste Land* resonated profoundly, relating meaninglessness and isolation, and the desperate quest for human connection... Other authors resonated as well. **Nabokov**, for his awareness of how our suffering can make us callous to the obvious suffering of another.”¹²

In this quote, Kalanithi first explains that meaning-making is linked to our interpersonal relationships. In referring to T.S. Eliot, he makes the same point using the opposite terms, connecting meaninglessness and being alone (isolation). Similarly, when he mentions Nabokov, Kalanithi immediately explains the reason why Nabokov's writing is influential. Without reading either of these literary works, we can still understand the ideas Kalanithi is sharing with us.

“The screaming didn't stop, and was soon accompanied by a gush of blood and other fluids. The neatness of medical diagrams did nothing to represent Nature, red not only in tooth and claw but in birth as well. (An **Anne Geddes** photo this was not.)”¹³

In this second example, there are fewer clues to follow about Anne Geddes' work. Because in this scene she is being contrasted to an image of Nature (and childbirth) that is messy, we can infer that she was a photographer, and that her work was depicting Nature or childbirth in a neat or organized style.

Although these clues only offer us a superficial understanding of Geddes's work, we can still use this analysis to understand Kalanithi's point in the passage. If you are curious to look at examples of [Geddes' work](#), you will see that this reference is actually quite humorous!

Recognizing Literary Devices in *When Breath Becomes Air*

We have mentioned before that *When Breath Becomes Air* is a memoir, which means it tells the story of true events from parts of Kalanithi's life. It is written in the style of a novel, including the tools that novelists often use to make their writing more aesthetically pleasing: literary devices.

This section can help you do two things to improve your reading comprehension and speed in *When Breath Becomes Air* and other similar materials you read at Vanderbilt:

1. Focus on Literary Devices: interpret literary devices to understand sentences and paragraphs as you read
2. See the Big Picture: See how interpretations of these devices fit together to reveal overarching themes in the story

¹² *When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi, 2016, Random House, Kindle Edition, p. 30. Emphasis added.

¹³ *When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi, 2016, Random House, Kindle Edition, p. 63. Emphasis added.

Imagery

Kalanithi wrote *When Breath Becomes Air* to encourage people to reflect on what was important to them. This goal has influenced his writing style and artistic choices. In particular, Kalanithi uses [imagery](#), or descriptions of visuals and other sensory experiences, to help us more vividly imagine the scenes as we read.

As you read the example quote below, **imagine** how it might look and feel to be in the room:

“At moments, the weight of it all became palpable. It was in the air, the stress and misery. Normally, you breathed it in, without noticing it. But some days, like a humid muggy day, it had a suffocating weight of its own. Some days, this is how it felt when I was in the hospital: trapped in an endless jungle summer, wet with sweat, the rain of tears of the families of the dying pouring down.”¹⁴

Reading this passage, can you imagine days with weather like Kalanithi describes, and feel a new understanding of the grief he witnessed?

The **imagery** is not a literal description (it did not actually rain inside, and he doesn't leave the hospital), but the passage is enhanced by his description. In this moment, the grief of the families was so great that instead of human tears, it felt like raindrops in a storm because of how many tears they shed and how sad they made him feel.

Using this imagery, Kalanithi is describing the grief like a rainy summer to associate this moment with something most of us have personally witnessed so we can better imagine how it felt. This way of fully participating in his story can help inspire the reflection Kalanithi hoped you can experience through his book.



Notice: Imagery

As you read, you may notice images that return throughout the book. For example, Kalanithi uses the clothing he wears to mark his transition from doctor to patient, from wearing a white doctor's coat to putting on a patient's hospital gown. Noticing these recurring images can help you identify larger themes in the text, such as the clothing representing Kalanithi's shifting identity throughout the story.



Want to Know More? Consultations

If you would like support for your English writing, speaking, and pronunciation skills as you tackle difficult texts, consider signing up for [1-to-1 Consultations](#) or our [writeELC](#) course at the English Language Center.

Metaphors

Throughout *When Breath Becomes Air*, Kalanithi uses **metaphors and similes** as tools to explain ideas. Simply put, [metaphors](#) and [similes](#) are comparisons that help describe something. These comparisons are usually not literal, and often help us understand something more quickly or succinctly. A simile is a type of metaphor, but slightly different because it uses *like* or *as* to make the comparison.

Even though metaphors and similes are more commonly found in fiction literature, non-fiction also uses many metaphors and similes to help the reader to interpret a deeper meaning. Kalanithi uses metaphors and similes to be descriptive and persuasive as well as to communicate a mood (*i.e.*, feeling) to the reader. For example, here Kalanithi uses a metaphor to describe his experience operating on a patient:

The dark gray rotting tumor seemed an invader in the fleshy peach convolutions of the brain, and I felt real anger.¹⁵

¹⁴ *When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi, 2016, Random House, Kindle Edition, p. 77.

¹⁵ *When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi, 2016, Random House, Kindle Edition, p. 95.

The metaphor of an invader can help us understand how Kalanithi views tumors. Both invaders and tumors are unwelcome, and his role is to fight the cancer until it is gone, much like an army would defend land in a war. The comparison shows how Kalanithi and many doctors approach cancer treatment. The next section demonstrates how you can **interpret** other metaphors in the book.

How can you interpret a metaphor once you identify one?

Metaphors and similes come in three parts. Follow these steps to interpret them:

1. All metaphors are comparing two items, so first, identify the **focus** of the metaphor (the **main item** you are meant to better understand).
2. Separate it from the **secondary item** (what the main item is being compared to).
3. Once you have identified those two parts, think of what the metaphor’s **ground** is, namely, the aspect that both items have in common.
4. Then use the ground to analyze the metaphor’s **meaning**.

Focus on Metaphors

Use the table below to help you recognize and interpret metaphors and similes in the book.

Metaphor or Simile	Main Item	Secondary Item	Commonality (the <i>ground</i>)	Meaning Analysis
p. 55: “I tried decoding the indecipherable scribbles in Garcia’s chart, which was like reading hieroglyphics.”	the scribbles	hieroglyphics	he is unable to read both of them	the metaphor uses exaggeration to create humor, because Kalanithi is describing the handwriting like an ancient language he cannot hope to read
p. 56: “I observed a lot of suffering; worse, I became inured to it. Drowning, even in blood, one adapts, learns to float, to swim, even to enjoy life, bonding with the nurses, doctors, and others who are clinging to the same raft, caught in the same tide.”	adapting to witnessing suffering	floating, swimming, and clinging to a raft caught in a tide	both items describe something he has limited control over, as he could not stop seeing suffering at the hospital or affect the direction of the tide. Also, swimming in water and witnessing human suffering describe situations he needed to actively work to survive in and maintain emotional wellbeing.	Kalanithi felt like he was gradually caring less about the suffering he witnessed in his patients as he developed a natural coping mechanism (becoming numb), an emotional tool he used to survive these difficult emotional experiences.

Notice: Recurring Metaphors

You may notice that Kalanithi discusses *breath* and *air* many times throughout the book (and in the title). Noticing the details of his descriptions of these themes can help you identify larger themes in the text, such as Kalanithi’s struggle with lung cancer

(the source of his breathing) and searching for deeper understandings of life and death: When we are no longer breathing, do the oxygen and carbon dioxide around us have the same significance?

Reflecting on Your Interests

Kalanithi's main goal in *When Breath Becomes Air* is to inspire you to reflect on what makes life worth living in the face of death. You can use this book to ask yourself:

- What is most important for me to live a full and satisfying life?
- If I were to tell my story, where would I begin? What could I inspire others to do?



Focus on
You

Reflect on your cultural, linguistic, family, ethnic, religious, and educational background and experiences. If you wrote a memoir about this time in your life, what would the story be about?

Looking Forward

Upon arrival at Vanderbilt University, you will begin a new chapter in your life story. How do you want to spend your time on campus? What are you most passionate about? These questions can feel overwhelming at first, but you do not need to know the answers yet. In fact, the Vanderbilt community will help you explore answers during orientation and Vanderbilt Visions events throughout the fall semester.

Here are some on-campus resources that can support your search:

- [Vanderbilt Student Organizations](#)
- [Center for Student Wellbeing](#)
- [University Counseling Center \(UCC\)](#)
- [The English Language Center \(ELC\)](#)
- [Student Center for Social Justice and Identity \(SCSJI\)](#)
- [First-Generation Student Resources \(First VU and Network First-Gen\)](#)
- [Campus Resources for Latinx Students \(SomosVU\)](#)
- [Resources for Low-Income Students \(PersistVU\)](#)
- [OIE Identity Centers:](#)
 - [Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center](#)
 - [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Life \(LGBTQI Life\)](#)
 - [Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center](#)
 - [Office of Religious Life](#)

Coming to Vanderbilt marks a turning point in your life. It will be a time of change, discovery, and growth that can both challenge and inspire you. You can use this opportunity to borrow some wisdom from Paul Kalanithi and endeavor to find meaning every day in the ordinary and extraordinary.

Summary

We hope that you are ready to implement our advice as you continue reading *When Breath Becomes Air*. As needed, refer to this guide to develop your reading skills throughout your time at Vanderbilt University.

For further guidance from the English Language Center, sign up for [1-to-1 Consultations](#) while classes are in session. If you have questions, please contact elc@vanderbilt.edu.

Find this supplement and more online [here](#) or by copying and pasting this URL:

<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/elc/resources/supplement-to-when-breath-becomes-air/>