



VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY  
English Language Center

## **Transcript:** **Introduction to the “Supplement to *Now Is Not the Time to Panic*”**

Welcome to the Introduction to the Supplement to *Now Is Not the Time to Panic*\*, by Kevin Wilson. The English Language Center created this supplement, or guide, to support incoming undergraduate students at Vanderbilt University who want to know more about U.S. culture or who use English as an additional language. So, what does our Supplement do?

First of all, we want this supplement to help you read complex texts about unfamiliar topics. We also want to help you internalize relevant themes from the book, *Now Is Not the Time to Panic*. Lastly, we want to help you engage more fully in campus-wide conversations about the book. How will we accomplish this goal?

Well, we review reading strategies such as building background knowledge, previewing, and skimming. We explore skills for improving reading accuracy, comprehension, and speed by looking at the book structure, including a book summary and sections about recognizing chapter organization, spotting plot structure, and identifying cultural references and slang that are not clarified directly in the book. We analyze Kevin Wilson’s writing style, for example, identifying literary devices such as narrative voice and metaphors that can enhance your reading experience. And lastly, we offer prompts to help you reflect on the book’s central theme: belonging. More about that in a minute.

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 throughout your time at Vanderbilt. Before we go any further, you might like to know what *Now Is Not the Time to Panic* is about.

Kevin Wilson: It's a story that's set in the summer of 1996 in a small rural town in Tennessee, much like the one I grew up in, where a young girl, a teenager, 16 years old, Frankie Budge, meets this new boy in town for the summer, Zeke. And the two of them recognize that they're each kind of kindred spirits: strange, weird outcasts. And they work together to create this poster that they then hang up all over the town of Coalfield. And it ends up causing an incredible panic that spreads from the town to the state, to the country, and becomes worldwide. It's something that's remembered years and years afterward, but nobody knows who made it. And so now Frankie, an adult with a child of her own and a successful career, gets a phone call from a reporter who's discovered that she was responsible for it. And so she has to think back on that summer and search out Zeke, who she hasn't seen since 1996, to let him know what's happening.

As you might imagine after hearing a summary of Frankie and Zeke’s story, the primary theme throughout *Now Is Not the Time to Panic* is belonging. When asked about this concept, Dean Gresalfi said, “*Now is Not the Time to Panic* invites us to think about the dual themes of trying to find our place while simultaneously looking forward to where we are headed. It is a search for

‘being’ while also longing to find another place, and that tension, throughout, evokes our desire for belonging.”

Once you arrive on campus, the discussions you have about the book during orientation and in your Vanderbilt Visions groups will delve deeper into three of the book’s central themes: belonging, growing older, and the power of art. Our supplement offers many tools, links, and tips to help you gain a more complete understanding of the text and these themes.

You will begin a new phase of your life when you move to Nashville and begin living at Vanderbilt University. At the English Language Center, we want to create pathways for you to engage more fully on campus. We have created this Supplement to *Now Is Not the Time to Panic* to support your reading by looking at details such as plot organization, voice, metaphors, and cultural references not clarified directly in the book.

We hope this supplement supports your experience with this year’s Campus Reading and we look forward to meeting you during orientation!

\*You can find the Supplement to *Now Is Not the Time to Panic* on our website [here](#).