

AP Language and Composition
Summer Reading Assignment
(Pre-DP, Health Academy, and Traditional)
The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks
by Rebecca Skloot

Respond to each of the questions as you finish reading the accompanying chapter(s).
Your response should be **typed** and in **complete sentences**.
Content and personal reflection are the most important elements; however, spelling and grammar are important as well.

To receive full credit, you should fully address the questions using relevant examples from life and/or quotes and details from the text. Be sure to cite all evidence borrowed from the text. Any included quotation should be accompanied by the page number where the quotation is found. You should put the page number in parentheses at the end of the sentence that contains the quote.

***You do not need to retype the questions since your response should adequately address the questions.

The **REQUIRED** assignment is due **Monday, August 13, 2018**.
This will be the first graded assignment. Be sure to carefully follow directions.
In addition to the **REQUIRED** assignment, there will be in-class discussion and activities.

If you have any questions, please contact
kiersten_bordner@scps.k12.fl.us or
douglas_hernandez@scps.k12.fl.us or
Emily_padilla@scps.k12.fl.us

All responses will be submitted to the plagiarism detection website, VeriCite, during the first week of school. Students may not borrow any material from the internet or any other source; doing so will result in a zero for the assignment.

***Note: Some chapters may not have any questions while some chapters may have multiple questions.**

“A Few Words About This Book “

1. Why is it important that the author, Rebecca Skloot, addresses her purpose and her approach for having written this book?

“Prologue” - The Woman in the Photograph & Deborah’s Voice

2. In your opinion, how does this chapter set the tone for the book?

3. What topics/issues do you predict will be addressed throughout the book?

PART I: LIFE

Chapters 1-2

4. What is accomplished by providing an extensive history of the Lacks family? Is it effective? Why or why not?

Chapter 3

5. Based on the consent statement on page 31, do you believe TeLinde and Gey had the right to obtain tissue samples from Henrietta and others to use in their research? Explain your answer.

Chapter 4

6. Summarize the main obstacles Gey and his assistants faced in their effort to grow cells in a lab.
7. As a result of overcoming these obstacles, Henrietta's cancer cells begin to successfully grow with "mythological intensity" (40). In your opinion, was it a good idea for Gey to immediately begin giving away samples of HeLa cells? Explain your answer.

Chapter 5

8. Skloot addresses Henrietta's maternal characteristics. How does this character development affect our understanding of the incident with Elsie and Henrietta's initial decision to keep her diagnosis a secret? What does this reveal about her personality?

Chapter 6

9. Reread the opening quote by Elie Wiesel. How does Skloot's conversation with Roland Pattillo and Deborah's reaction toward Skloot's request relate to Wiesel's quote?

Chapter 7

10. Besides the fact that Henrietta's cells seemed to be immortal, in what ways were HeLa cells being used by scientists?
11. Who is Alexis Carrell? What are some of his ethically controversial beliefs?

Chapter 8

12. After reading doctors' notes in her medical files, do you think Henrietta's medical treatment and her relationship with her doctors would have been different had she been white? Support your answer with evidence.

Chapters 9-10

13. The towns of Turner Station and Clover are thoroughly described. What do the descriptions reveal about both the past and the present of the townspeople and their hardships?

Chapter 11

14. What was Henrietta's final request? Think of a time you had to make a request or someone requested that you do something. Was the request honored? How did it make you and/or the recipient feel?

PART II: DEATH

Chapter 12

15. Discuss how medical ethics are brought into question in this chapter.
16. Henrietta's cousin says that Henrietta "was tryin' to tell us something with that storm" (92). What do you think Henrietta could have been trying to say?

Chapter 13

17. Explain the irony of the Tuskegee HeLa production lab operating at the same time that the infamous syphilis study (mentioned on page 50) was being conducted. What does the existence of these two simultaneous projects reveal about race relations in the early 1950s?
18. What contributions did HeLa cells have on the emerging field of genetics? In what other ways were HeLa cells being used in medical research since they were commercially available?

Chapter 14

19. In your opinion, what is Gey's motivation to protect Henrietta Lacks' identity? Do you agree? Why or why not?

Chapter 15

20. Skloot recounts the abuse of the Lacks children, namely Deborah's abuse by Galen. Although difficult to read, why do you think Deborah wanted to include these painful memories as part of the overall narrative? How does Deborah's experience influence your opinion of her?

Chapter 16

21. According to Henrietta's Cousin Cliff, what is "beautiful" about the idea of "slaveowning white Lackses being buried under their black kin"?

Chapter 17

22. Provide three instances in which Chester Southam injected HeLa cells into patients without their knowledge or consent. What was his justification for his actions? Do you believe he was justified? Explain.

Chapter 18

23. How did the public respond to the idea of cell hybrids? How did the media influence the public's perception of cell hybrids?

Chapter 19

24. What is your opinion of the grown Lacks children? Should their choices and behaviors be excused? Why or why not? Provide specific examples from the text to support your answer.

Chapter 21

25. Sonny and Lawrence repeat the phrase "That's a miracle" when discussing the scientific advances made possible by their mother's cells. What does this phrase reveal about their worldview and values?

26. What are “night doctors,” and where did the term originate? Were the black community’s fears real or imaginary? Explain your answer.
27. What is ironic about the original intentions of Johns Hopkins hospital compared the studies being conducted there in the late 1960s?

Chapter 22

28. Do you agree that Henrietta should have been correctly identified in order to give her “the fame she so richly deserves,” or do you think her anonymity should have been protected (175)? Explain your answer.

PART III: IMMORTALITY

Chapter 23

29. How is a language barrier present between the Lacks family and the medical professionals? What was the result of the miscommunication? Think of a time when you had a problem with understanding or communication. What led to that miscommunication?

Chapter 25

30. What is your opinion of the Supreme Court Case of California ruling that “when tissues are removed from your body, with or without your consent, any claim you might have had to owning your tissue vanishes” (205). Do you agree with the court case? Why or why not?

Chapter 26

31. Explain why Gold’s journalism could be considered irresponsible and/or unethical.

Chapter 28

32. Analyze Johns Hopkins’ official response to Barbara Wyche’s letter. Do you feel it was an appropriate response? Explain why or why not.

Chapter 29

33. What information about her mother was Deborah unwilling to share with Skloot? Why do you think Deborah was so protective?

Chapter 31

34. Explain why Deborah believes the Marvel supervillain, Hela, Goddess of Death, was based on her mother. Provide specific details and make direct connections to Henrietta.

Chapter 32

35. Deborah and Zakariyya visit Christoph Lengauer’s lab at Johns Hopkins for the first time and see their mother’s cells. How is this visit/interaction so different from their previous experiences with Johns Hopkins? How does their reaction to seeing their mother’s cells reflect their feelings about their mother?

Chapter 33

36. Consider Deborah's statement: "Like I am always telling my brother, if you gonna go into history, you can't do it with a hate attitude. You got to remember, times was different" (276). Do you think it is possible to approach history from an objective point of view (eliminating personal opinions)? Why or why not, and how is this important when considering the history of Henrietta Lacks?

Chapter 34

37. Why do you think Deborah finally gives Skloot access to Henrietta's medical records? Later, Deborah says that Skloot cannot have the records. What is Deborah's explanation for changing her mind?

Chapters 35-36

38. How does religious faith help the Lacks family interpret the scientific information they receive about HeLa? What new perspective and understanding does Skloot gain after the events at Gary's home?

Afterword/ Final Thoughts

39. If Henrietta Lacks could know how important her cells have been to science, do you think she would approve that her cells were taken from her without her consent or knowledge? Explain your answer.

40. Do you think the attitude among the Lacks family members that they should be financially compensated for Henrietta's contribution to science is born out of their poverty and/or oppression based on their race? Do you think if the family were financially comfortable and not the subjects of regular discrimination that their feelings of being owed compensation might be different? Explain