Summer Reading Assignments
AP Language and Composition

Selected Books:

_The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks_, by Rebecca Skloot (ISBN 9781400052189)

Both books are available for order at Books-A-Million and online. You may also obtain them on an e-reader (Kindle, Nook, iPad, etc. However, no cell phones or iPods are allowed in the classroom.)

If you have any questions about this assignment, you may email me at Taimeka.Berry@cmcsh.net. I will respond to all Summer Assignment emails on Fridays with the exception of the week of June 3 and July 1.

**Part One: Essay Assignment – Due August 9, 2013**

_The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks_ is the story behind the HeLa cell line, an immortal line of cells that is responsible for some of the most important innovations in modern science, from the vaccine for polio to discoveries in cancer and AIDS. The HeLa cells were taken from an African American mother of five in Baltimore without her consent. She later died from a very aggressive cancer. Despite the importance of Ms. Lacks’ cells, her family continued to live in poverty and ill health, knowing nothing of her great contributions. Rebecca Skloot spent ten years and great personal expense investigating this story and her book raises questions about ownership of one’s cells and the ethics of medicine in the context of race, class, and education.

**Writing prompt:**

In the wake of a failed experiment, a scientist says, “The scientific enterprise is all about failure; I mean, you learn so much from failure. And you learn almost nothing from success.” Does Rebecca Skloot’s account of the story of HeLa support, dispute, or perhaps complicate this statement?

**Directions for Writing:** In a well-constructed, organized paper of 750 - 1000 words, develop your own answer to this question using specific material from the book to support your argument. Parenthetical citations should be in correct MLA format. (You MUST use the MLA style guide on the following webpage http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/. Your argument should have a workable, logical thesis without an overly broad introduction.

**Format:** The paper must be double-spaced and use 12 pt. Times New Roman font. It should have a title (but not a title page) and a proper heading in MLA format. Page numbers are required for any assignment that is 2 pages or more. You may not exceed 1000 words. Additionally, you must have a digital copy of your paper to save to your HOME folder here at school (flash drive or email a copy to yourself-NOT to me. I do not accept emailed assignments.

**The essay is due on AUGUST 9th (the first full day of school) during your assigned class period. No late papers will be accepted.**
Part Two: Journal Assignment – Due August 16, 2013

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks

Rebecca Skloot introduced us to topics of values and ethics in *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. Skloot divided the book into three sections: *Life, Death, and Immortality*.

(1) In your own words, define values and ethics.

(2) Select a character from each of the three sections of the book and discuss what you believe his or her values and ethics were, as applied in that particular section of the book. Be sure to pick a unique person for each section. (For example, you can’t pick the author for two out of the three or three out of three sections.)

(3) Next, compare and contrast the values that you observed between each of the three characters you have selected. What did they value that was the same or similar? What was different? Give examples.

(4) Select one of the three characters that you chose in number (2) and compare and contrast your own values and ethics with those of that individual. What do you think you would have done had you been in the place of that person, based on your values and ethics: What would you have done the same? What would you have done differently?

(5) Finally, think about a time when one of your personal values was challenged? What were the circumstances? How did you respond?

Part Three: Portfolio Assignment – Due August 19, 2013

*On Writing*, by Stephen King

Stephen King, master of the horror genre, offers interesting advice about writing and the writing process. A combination of personal memoir and the art of writing, King remarks in the first foreword that “No one ever asks about the language.”

Your job is to analyze King’s use of language in his memoir in a way that makes sense to you, as a writer. You will become an active reader as you comment and reflect on passages that strike you as meaningful or important. Your portfolio must be typed in MLA style, 12-point Times New Roman font. Please follow the exact directions as stated below.

Top Five Passages (*Use this as your title*)

Select the five most influential passages that illustrate ideas about writing that have meaning to you.
1. Write the sentence (or sentences), complete with page number citation in MLA format.
2. Discuss the use of this sentence (or sentences) in the context of the text.
3. Why did you select this passage?
4. How does King’s use of language (ie. the actual words being used) play an important role in understanding his purpose?
5. What is the tone of the passage? How does King use specific strategies to create this tone? (Use the Summer Reading Definitions List found here [http://facweb.st-agnes.org/home/pmcfarlin/html/AP%20Language%20Composition%20Terms.html](http://facweb.st-agnes.org/home/pmcfarlin/html/AP%20Language%20Composition%20Terms.html)).
6. **Your Toolbox** - King believes that it is a good idea for all writers to have a “toolbox,” or a collection of practical “tools” to use in their own writing. Select **five tools** that you believe will help you as a writer and explain why you believe they will assist you in the writing process. As you select them, think about your own strengths and weaknesses as a writer. Please number your selections 1-5.

**Instructor’s Final Thought**

“Reading is the creative center of a writer’s life” (King 147). Here is a final reflection on the above words of wisdom.

You cannot be an effective writer without being an active reader. AP Language and Composition will ask you to be both.