

AP Language and Composition Summer Reading and Writing Assignments

Contact: Mr. David Staub – English Department Head

dstaub@berkscatholic.org

Congratulations rising Juniors on accepting the challenge of AP Language and Composition!

Reading Assignment #1: *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot

- Her name was Henrietta Lacks, but scientists know her as HeLa. She was a poor black tobacco farmer whose cells—taken without her knowledge in 1951—became one of the most important tools in medicine, vital for developing the polio vaccine, cloning, gene mapping, in vitro fertilization, and more. Henrietta’s cells have been bought and sold by the billions, yet she remains virtually unknown, and her family can’t afford health insurance.
- You may purchase a copy of the book (used or new), borrow it from the library or the library’s digital loan service (Libby), or download a free pdf at:

https://www.ginatxboe1.com/uploads/1/2/5/5/12552697/the_immortal_life_of_henrietta_lacks_pdfdrive.com.pdf

Writing Assignment #1: Double-Entry Journal

- There will be multiple writing assignments due during the first quarter that center around the issues presented in this book (*Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*). Please keep your annotations and double-entry journal in a safe space. You will hand it in on the first day of class and you will need it again for other assignments. See below for more detailed instructions on the double-entry journal.

Writing Assignment #2: Literary Analysis Essay

- Skloot begins the book with the following quote from Elie Wiesel: “We must not see any person as an abstraction. Instead, we must see in every person a universe with its own secrets, with its own treasures, with its own sources of anguish, and with some measure of triumph.” Analyze the book in light of this quote. Explain the various ways in which both the scientific community and the media are guilty of having viewed Henrietta and her family as abstractions. What are the consequences of this perspective? How is Skloot’s different perspective evident in the way she conducted her research and wrote the book?

- You do not need to use outside sources for this essay. Please compose a three-page essay in third person and use MLA format (12 point font, double spaced throughout, MLA heading; consult OWL at Purdue University for MLA guidelines). Please include an interesting title, something other than the title of the book. Also incorporate three to five textual examples to support your line of reasoning and cite each according to MLA format.

Reading Assignment #2: *On Writing* by Stephen King

- *On Writing*, as its title suggests, is Stephen King's book on how to write. King has split the book into two parts; in the first, he narrates the story of his life in a series of vignettes. Here, King displays his characteristic wit and pathos in telling the humorous and bittersweet story of his genesis as an author. This is part memoir, part writing guide.
- You may purchase a copy of the book (used or new), borrow it from the library or the library's digital loan service (Libby), or download a free pdf at:
http://biblioteka.teatrobraz.ru/files/file/English_cinema/Stephen_King_On_Writing.pdf

Writing Assignment #3: Double-Entry Journal

- We will be analyzing Stephen King's use of rhetorical strategies to communicate his purpose and reach his audience. The double-entry will help you to establish how King does what he does with language. See below for more detailed instructions on the double-entry journal. **In the end you should have a total of 20 double entries for this book. The entries should be spread across the book (some from the beginning, middle, and end).**

Reading Assignment #3: *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne

- Read *The Scarlet Letter* and be prepared for a 50 point test on its plot upon your return to school. As you read, take notes, write questions, draw conclusions...draw pictures! Do what you must to actively engage in the text and I promise you will understand the story much better.
- You may purchase a copy of the book (used or new), borrow it from the library or the library's digital loan service (Libby), or download a free pdf at:
<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/25344/25344-h/25344-h.htm>

Double-Entry Journal Format Instructions:

Annotating a text takes time because it forces you to read actively, think critically, and respond. In double-entry journals, facts, quotations, summaries, or paraphrases are written on the left and interpretations or reactions on the right.

Just to be clear: In the left-hand (fact) column, you may include quotations, summaries, or paraphrases from the text. In the right-hand column (interpretation and reaction) column, you may analyze or personally respond.

Reflections should be more than just “I like this idea,” or “I’ve never met a person who could live up to this.” Comments should reflect thoughtful views on the implications of what the author is saying. The WHY and HOW should be explored rather than the WHAT. Be sure to title and date each entry. Below are some possible prompts for addressing the left-hand column of your double-entry journal:

- How does this tie in with my experience, previous readings, class discussions, expectations?
- What do I not understand? What questions do I have?
- Do I agree/disagree with the author? Why?
- What impressed me/annoyed me about the reading or just this passage?
- What do I notice about the author’s techniques—how does he or she emphasize a point or evoke a reaction? (Consider mood, tone, foreshadowing, irony, figurative language devices, sound devices, rhetorical devices like diction/word choice, connotation, tone, syntax and other literary devices. Figurative language devices include simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, synecdoche, metonymy. Sound devices include rhyme, alliteration, assonance, consonance, euphony, cacophony. How is the writer using language to achieve a purpose?)
- How does this new information fit with my beliefs, my philosophy, prior knowledge?
- Where have my ideas been challenged, changed, confirmed? Or how does this passage challenge one of my beliefs or personal experience?
- Speaker: Consider who the writer is and what s/he wants to communicate. Use this to determine the writer’s credibility within certain passages.
- Occasion: Determine what prompted or motivated the author to write the text and factors such as time, context, place and setting. Evaluate whether the writer’s motivations are valid.
- Audience: Who is the writer trying to address primarily? Who is the intended audience here? Gauge whether the writer effectively communicates this.
- Purpose: Think about the reasons the writer composed the text: Persuasion? Comparison? Explanation? Information? Some other purpose?
- Subject: Explain what a passage is really about beyond the surface level.
- Tone: Assess the writer’s attitude with which the author addresses the subject. Use diction, the writer’s choice of words, to determine the attitude toward the subject. Connotation of words matter, so define and explain the impression of all words you do not understand.

- Assertion: Identify the writer's main claim, the overarching thesis of the text. More specific than the subject, the assertion is the point the writer makes about the topic.
- Claims: Identify the main points the writer makes to prove the assertion.
- Appeals: How does the writer appeal to reader's emotions (pathos)? How does the writer prove the assertion with logic (logos)? How does the writer establish credibility on the subject? Consider the pathos, logos, and ethos of the passages you select as you read.
- Rhetorical Strategies: Evaluate the writer's techniques in delivery and how effective these techniques are for rhetorical purposes.
- Bias: Evaluate the perspective of the writer that may influence the assertion and claims. Evaluate your bias as a reader.