

## **AP Language and Composition Summer Reading/Viewing**

AP Language and Composition is a course unlike other English courses students have taken before. It focuses exclusively on nonfiction for its material and the craft of the argument for its writing. As such, we will be reading, viewing, and listening to texts that offer perspectives on all aspects of American life. Our first unit focuses on topics relating to the body.

Over the summer students will read *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot and view a documentary of choice relating to the first unit topic. *The Immortal Life*, a recent bestseller, follows the author's quest to discover the identity and life story of Henrietta Lacks, a poor black woman from the mid-twentieth century from whom scientists discovered the first line of immortal cells.

### **Reading:**

Read *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot and **complete the annotations assignment** as outlined at the end of this document.

### **Viewing:**

Watch any full-length documentary (new to you) that fits our first unit theme of the body. This could include documentary films related to violence, beauty standards, health, race, sexuality, athletics, dance, fashion, etc.

Suggested Titles:

- *Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution* (2020)
- *The Inventor: Out for Blood in Silicon Valley* (2019)
- *Free Solo* (2018)
- *Minding the Gap* (2018)
- *How to Survive a Plague* (2012)
- *There's Something Wrong with Aunt Diane* (2011)
- *Mad Hot Ballroom* (2005)

\*\*Note: documentaries often contain mature themes. Consult the website [Common Sense Media](#) to help choose a documentary appropriate for you.

### **Writing:**

Using *The Immortal Life* and your chosen documentary as **evidence**, answer **one** of the following questions in 750-1,000 words, typed.

Questions:

- What threatens the body? What should be done or not done in response to these threats?
- Do you define your body? Does your body define you?
- What is physical beauty? Does it matter?
- What is the line between health and vanity?
- Who has rights over a body? What is the extent of those rights? Who decides?

These are meant to be personal, opinion-based responses. They do NOT need an intro, thesis, body paragraphs, conclusion, etc., though they should be organized, proofread, and offer the maturity and depth of critical thinking required of an AP student.

### **Annotating:**

In addition to reading, you must annotate *House on Mango Street* (write directly in your book) and present your book for a grade.

Annotating is a very useful exercise. It can help you navigate the book during discussions, study for tests and quizzes, find passages for essays, and, most importantly, better understand the text as you read.

### **Requirements:**

- Every CHAPTER should have a summary (see below).
- Every PAGE should have one additional annotation (see below).
- You must WRITE WORDS IN THE BOOK for an annotation/summary to count. Underlining or highlighting by itself does not count.

### **Summaries:**

- Write a brief summary at the beginning or end of each chapter after you've read it explaining what happens in that chapter.
- Include key characters and events.

### **Additional Annotations:**

Here are some options for what to annotate:

- Circle words that are unfamiliar then write their definitions in the margin (after you have looked up their meanings).
- Underline or bracket [ ] passages that are interesting to you or seem important. Then, in the margin write a brief note on why you think that passage is important.

- Ask questions. If something confuses you or you feel like there is information about an event, character, scene, etc. that you should know more about, write your question in the margin.
- Make predictions. Do you think you know what might happen? Does something seem like it may be important later? Do you think this scene might foreshadow something later? Write your prediction in the margin.
- Clarify. If you figure something out or have an epiphany while reading but fear you may forget it later, write down a brief summary of the passage or your ideas in the margin.