

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks

Prologue (page 1)– The Woman in the Photograph

Comprehension

Please follow these instructions carefully and answer all the questions.

1. First, read just the first line of each paragraph.
2. Next, read the entire page from the prologue one time without using a dictionary. You may highlight or underline any new vocabulary words, but you should not stop to find them in a dictionary at this time.
3. Now answer the questions about the paragraphs:

Paragraph 1: What do we learn about the person the author is describing in this paragraph? Who is this person?

Paragraphs 2 and 3 (lines 9-13): What is the name of the woman in the photograph?

What does HeLa mean? Can you guess where this name comes from?

Paragraph 4:

What happened to the cells of the woman in this photograph?

The author says she thinks about many things in this paragraph. What are two or three things she says she thinks about?

Paragraph 5: How many HeLa cells are alive today and how many have scientists grown through the years?

Vocabulary

Choose a synonym or meaning from the following list for each of the **bold** vocabulary words in the sentences. Write the letter of the synonym/meaning on the line next to the sentence number. The first one has been done as an example.

- | | |
|---|--|
| a. make an egg grow in a lab | b. impossible to believe or imagine |
| c. cover a wide area or large number | d. in the best time or condition |
| e. explanation of a picture | f. look at for a long time |
| g. separated/pulled apart | h. force of nature that causes things to fall to Earth |
| i. make a copy | j. use of chemicals to control disease |
| k. lack of knowledge/unaware | l. fix/put together/connect |
| m. part of a cell that controls characteristics | n. an abnormal growth |

- ___1. The first page of John's report was **torn** (line 2), so his supervisor told him he would not accept the report.
- ___2. John tried to **patch** (line 2) the pieces of the paper together, but the tear was too big, and he had to print the report again.
- ___3. The student was so busy texting during the lecture that she was completely **oblivious** (line 5) to the teacher's question, and she could not answer it.
- ___4. After the doctor found a **tumor** (line 5) in the patient's neck, he tested it to see if it was cancer.
- ___5. I did not understand the importance of the photo until I read the **caption** (line 7) below it.
- ___6. Parents often tell their children it is not polite to **stare** (line 14) at people on the street
- ___7. If you throw something in the air, **gravity** (line 18) will bring it back down.
- ___8. Sometimes the treatment for cancer is **chemotherapy** (line 19), which has many side effects, such as loss of hair.
- ___9. Scientists often experiment with **cloning** (line 19) living things, and in 1996 they produced a sheep named Dolly this way. However, nobody has been able to **clone** a human yet.
- ___10. Your **genes** (line 19) determine the characteristics you were born with, such as your hair and eye color.

- __11. Through modern science, if a woman cannot become pregnant, she might be able to have a baby through **in vitro fertilization** (line 19)
- __12. When I look at the sky and see all the stars, I think it is **inconceivable** (line 24) to understand how far away they all are or to count them.
- __13. Frederick Douglass lived to be almost 80 years old and his life **spanned** (line 26) important years of US history, covering from slavery, to the Civil War, and emancipation of the slaves.
- __14. Martin Luther King was killed when he was only 39 years old and **in his prime** (lines 26-27)

I. Word Parts:

1. Look at the following words from the reading:

mother less	immortal	inconceivable
suffix	prefix	prefix

What do the prefixes *im-* and *in-* mean? What does the suffix *-less* mean?

Write the meanings for *-less* _____ and *in-* and *im-* _____

2. What other words do you know with the prefixes *im-* or *in-* and the suffix *-less*?

Write your words on the lines below:

less: _____

im: _____

in: _____

3. Other prefixes with the same meaning as *in-* and *im-* are: *il-* *ir-* *un-*

Write some words that begin with the prefixes *il-* *ir-* and *un-* on the lines below.

il: _____

ir: _____

un: _____

II. Using apostrophes: Contractions and Possessives

Contractions

1. What is a contraction? How can you know if a word is a contraction?

A contraction is: _____

What kind of punctuation mark does a contraction always have? _____

2. Each of the following words is an example of a contraction from the reading. Find the word on the line in the reading and then write the two words that each contraction comes from.

Be prepared to explain your answers.

Follow the example. Example: there's (line 2) there is

I've (lines 2) _____ it's (line 4) _____ hasn't (line 4) _____

it's (line 9) _____ she's (line 10) _____ she'd (line 15) _____

I'm (line 19) _____ they'd (line 26) _____

Possessives

1. Look at the following words from the reading (in bold). Are these contractions? Why do these words have an apostrophe ('s) at the end?

world's (lines 11/12 – **world's** first immortal human cells)

Henrietta's (line 22 – **Henrietta's** cells)

2. Look at the following word from the reading (in bold). This word also shows possession. Why doesn't this word have an apostrophe?

its (line 2 – **its** left corner) _____

3. Can you find any other possessive pronouns in this reading? Write these words and the line you found them on in the reading.

4. In the following sentences some of the words need an apostrophe. Add an apostrophe to the words that require them. Put a line under each word that shows possession.

- a. Its interesting to read about other peoples lives and events in history.
- b. In this class weve discussed different aspects of segregation, including its problems and the laws that abolished it.
- c. We learned that each state has its own laws. In the past some states laws created segregation, such as sitting at the back of a bus.
- d. Many people risked their lives to oppose segregation by joining the Civil Rights Movement.
- e. Through Martin Luther King Jrs leadership and many other peoples efforts, things have changed since the days of Jim Crow.
- f. The worlds first scientific breakthrough in duplicating human cells took place in a laboratory at a famous medical center named Johns Hopkins.
- g. Theres a book that tells the story of Henrietta Lacks, a Black woman who grew up in the Jim Crow South. Scientists used her cells in this medical breakthrough.
- h. Many students are reading Henriettas story and discussing its importance in their classes this semester.
- i. Should doctors take a patients cells without getting permission from the patient or his/her family?

III. Present Perfect Review

1. In our grammar lessons we learned several ways we can use present perfect verb forms in English as follows:
 - a. finished action with no specific time/no time words
 - b. something that happened several times (repeated past action)
 - c. with adverbs that establish a relationship of a past action to the present
(*just/already/recently/ever/yet/finally/so far/until now*)
 - d. something that started in the past and continues until now (not finished) with *for* and *since*
2. Decide which of the four ways to use present perfect you see in each sentence below. Write the letter of your answer from the choices above (a-b-c-d) in the space provided. Follow the example.

Example: ___ We have just read the first page of the prologue of the book about Henrietta Lacks.

- ___a. Rebecca Skloot has written a book about the HeLa cells.
- ___b. Researchers have known about these cells for about 60 years, but Henrietta's family has known about this research for about 40 years.
- ___c. Since Henrietta's death, scientists have used her cells for medical research.
- ___d. Scientists have sent Henrietta's cells to laboratories all over the world thousands of times.
- ___e. So far scientists have used HeLa cells to make several advances in medicine.
- ___f. However, they have not found a cure for cancer with these cells yet.
(OR They have not yet found a cure for cancer with these cells.)
- ___g. Since Henrietta died in 1951, scientists have duplicated her cells for research.
- ___h. Doctors all over the world have studied many HeLa cells.

3. There are several examples of present perfect verb forms in the reading. Find the examples in the paragraphs indicated below and circle them in the reading. Then decide which of the four ways to use present perfect each of these examples shows. (Use a-b-c-d as above.)

Paragraph #1 – Find two examples of present perfect.

Paragraph #2 – Find one example of present perfect.

Paragraph #4 (starting on line14) – Find two examples of present perfect.