

COMMON READ



What is a Common Read?

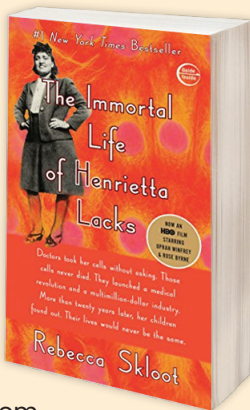
A Common Read is when a large group of people read the same book at the same time and then have discussions about that book. The discussions can be in book clubs, classrooms, or gatherings in the library.

Is this the first time the Tangipahoa Parish Library is conducting a Common Read?

This is our seventh year conducting a Common Read.

What is this year's Common Read book?

The *New York Times* bestseller, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot, is this year's Common Read book selection. This book is about Henrietta Lacks and the immortal cell line, known as HeLa, that came from Lacks's cervical cancer cells in 1951. Her cells—taken without her knowledge—became one of the most important tools in medicine. HeLa cells were vital for developing the polio vaccine; uncovering secrets of cancer, viruses, and the atom bomb's effects; helping lead to important advances like in vitro fertilization, cloning, and gene mapping; and have been bought and sold by the billions.



Skloot became interested in Lacks after a biology teacher referenced her but knew little about her. Skloot began conducting extensive research on her and worked with Lacks's family to create the book. The book is notable for its science writing and dealing with ethical issues of race and class in medical research. Skloot said that some of the information was taken from the journal of Deborah Lacks, Henrietta Lacks's daughter, as well as from "archival photos and documents, scientific and historical research."

How can I get a copy of the book?

The library has purchased a number of copies of the paperback edition. Audio books, e-books and large print books will also be available. Many of these will be cataloged for our branches, and cataloged for totes that will be loaned out to book clubs, senior centers, classrooms at schools, etc. People may check the book out from one of our branches or participate in a book club or other organization reading the novel. Copies are also available for purchase at each branch.

What is the object of the Common Read?

The object is three-fold:

1. To encourage reading.
2. To stimulate dialogue about the themes in this book—morality and ethics; racism, classism, sexism; technology and globalization; human suffering; scientific progress versus personal privacy; and immortality.
3. To foster a sense of community by bringing people together through literature.

What are the dates of the Common Read?

The library will begin the Common Read on Saturday, October 12 and will continue through May, 2025. Throughout the year, there will be programs and activities tied to the book's theme.

Can I start reading the book and be part of the Common Read after the October kickoff?

Yes. The Common Read will last through the year. There will be many opportunities to discuss the book throughout the year.