

# Honors: The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks

Content Area: **English Language Arts**  
Course(s): **Generic Course, English Literacy 2, Language Arts Literacy II Honors**  
Time Period: **4th Marking Period**  
Length: **3 weeks**  
Status: **Published**

## Unit Overview

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*Students will read and analyze the non-fiction novel, The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot. They will investigate and explore the impact of HeLa cells as well as study the themes of race, medical ethics, and owner consent and focus on up to date information related to the many issues that arise in the text.*

## Transfer

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- Students will be able to independently use their learning to...
  - Understand the role of historical context and its importance in a novel's meaning.
  - Draw conclusions about human rights violations in today's world
  - Evaluate the impact of segregation on society
  - Investigate the challenges faced by those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged
  - Investigate the impact of HeLa cells on society as well as themselves

## Meaning

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## Understandings

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Students will understand that...

- Events in history influence literary works
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## Essential Questions

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- Students will keep considering...
  - What do we mean by “bioethics”?
  - What role does morality play in science and medicine?
  - How do you evaluate the worth (costs/benefits) of progress?
  - Do you “own” your body?
  - In what ways do current scientific research methods differ from those in the past?
  - Where do you draw the line between hurtful and harmful?

## Application of Knowledge and Skill

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### Students will know...

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Students will know...

- Historical Context of the novel
- The influence of your environment on self
- The importance of cultural, global, and personal experiences
- themes specific to medical ethics debates, the importance of education, the impact of loss on children

### Students will be skilled at...

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Students will be skilled at...

- Reading with fluency and comprehension
- Identifying and examining literary elements

## Academic Vocabulary

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- Inoculation
- Ethical boundaries
- Inalienable rights
- Informed consent
- Human experimentation
- Immortal
- Gene mapping
- Specific anatomical and medical vocabulary(i.e. cervix)

## Learning Goal 1

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Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

## Target 1-Level 3

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Trace the development and importance of HeLa cells throughout the text.

LA.RL.9-10.3	Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
LA.RI.9-10.6	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetorical devices to advance that point of view or purpose.
LA.RI.9-10.10b	By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at grade level text-complexity or above.
LA.SL.9-10.1.C	Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.
LA.SL.9-10.1.D	Respond thoughtfully to various perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and justify own views. Make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

## Target 2

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- Draw conclusions and respond to text relating text/text, text/self, and text/world through variety of organized and coherent writing pieces, journal writing, research based projects and writing tasks, etc.

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LA.RL.9-10.10b	By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at grade level or above.
LA.W.9-10.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
LA.W.9-10.2.B	Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.
LA.W.9-10.2.D	Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.
LA.W.9-10.9.A	Apply grades 9–10 Reading standards to literature (e.g., “Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work [e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid mythology or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare]”).
LA.W.9-10.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

## Target 1

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Students will draw conclusions and respond to text relating text to text, text to self, and text to world through a variety of formal and informal writing peices.

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LA.RI.9-10.1	Accurately cite strong and thorough textual evidence, (e.g., via discussion, written response, etc.) and make relevant connections, to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferentially, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
LA.RI.9-10.10b	By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at grade level text-complexity or above.
LA.W.9-10.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
LA.W.9-10.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
LA.W.9-10.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.9-10.5	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, trying a new approach, or consulting a style manual (such as MLA or APA Style), focusing on

	addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
LA.W.9-10.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, share, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.
LA.W.9-10.9	Draw evidence from literary or nonfiction informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
LA.W.9-10.9.A	Apply grades 9–10 Reading standards to literature (e.g., “Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work [e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid mythology or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare]”).
LA.W.9-10.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
LA.SL.9-10.1.A	Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
LA.SL.9-10.1.D	Respond thoughtfully to various perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and justify own views. Make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.
LA.9-10.W.9-10.1	Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

### Learning Goal 3

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Select all applicable standards from the Standards tab.

Be sure to include the Anchor Standards for ELA, the Practice Standards for Math, the English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, and the applicable Technology standards.

### Target 1

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### Target 2

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### Summative Assessment

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- Final evaluation

## 21st Century Life and Careers

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CRP.K-12.CRP1	Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee.
CRP.K-12.CRP2	Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.
CRP.K-12.CRP4	Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.
CRP.K-12.CRP5	Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.
CRP.K-12.CRP6	Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
CRP.K-12.CRP7	Employ valid and reliable research strategies.
CRP.K-12.CRP8	Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
CRP.K-12.CRP11	Use technology to enhance productivity.
CRP.K-12.CRP12	Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence.

## Formative Assessment and Performance Opportunities

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- class discussion
- comprehension questions
- journal entries
- focused free writes
- teacher observation

## Accommodations/Modifications

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- supplemental notes
- audio version of the novel

## Interdisciplinary Connections

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- Analyze how the novel relates to human rights violations
- Examine biomedical ethics and how that affects personal ownership and agency
- Examine issues of race and how stereotypes affect cultural expectations
- Investigate how social class affects cultural outcomes

SOC.6.1.12

U.S. History: America in the World: All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to

think analytically about how past and present interactions of people, cultures, and the environment shape the American heritage. Such knowledge and skills enable students to make informed decisions that reflect fundamental rights and core democratic values as productive citizens in local, national, and global communities.

SOC.6.2.12.D.3.d

Analyze the extent to which racism was both a cause and consequence of imperialism, and evaluate the impact of imperialism from multiple perspectives.

9-12.HS-LS1-1.LS1.A.2

All cells contain genetic information in the form of DNA molecules. Genes are regions in the DNA that contain the instructions that code for the formation of proteins, which carry out most of the work of cells.

## Unit Resources

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- Multiple excerpts from documentaries and news broadcasts dealing with themes
- Multiple news articles about biomedical ethics, education, HeLa cells
- Novels
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