

## Culminating Writing Task Directions

“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.”

--Elie Wiesel from *The Nazi Doctors and the Nuremberg Code*

### Activity One: Analyze the prompt

Evaluate the effectiveness of Skloot’s style in portraying the story of HeLa cells as being as much about the people as it is about the science.

Write an essay that compares and contrasts the way Rebecca Skloot tells Henrietta’s story with how others in the scientific community or media have portrayed Henrietta and her situation. What details are emphasized in various accounts? Use proper grammar, conventions, spelling, and grade-appropriate words and phrases. Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support your argument and analysis.

1. What kind of prompt is this? Argumentative.

*I have to decide if Skloot’s style is effective and support my answer with examples of her style. Next, I have to compare her style with another science writer, using evidence from the text, proper grammar, and grade-appropriate vocabulary.*

2. The prompt asks you to discuss details. Which other two elements of style do you want to write about?

- ☐ **Diction**
- ☐ Imagery
- ☐ **Language**
- ☐ Syntax
- ☐ Tone

- 2B. Why did you choose these elements of style?

*Skloot’s diction shows how her purpose is in telling Skloot’s story. The figurative language she uses emphasizes the narrative aspects of her writing.*

3. Which science writer do you want to compare and contrast with Skloot?

- ☐ Rebecca Faden, “Immortal Cells, Moral Issues”
- ☐ Dale Keiger, “Immortal Cells, Enduring Issues”
- ☐ **Robert D. Truog,, et. al, “Paying Patients for Their Tissues**
- ☐ Sarah Zielinski, “Henrietta Lacks’ Immortal Cells”

- 3B. Why did you choose this text?

*This text contrasted most starkly with the writing style of Skloot.*

### Activity Two: Claim Paragraph

Although science writers Rebecca Skloot and Robert D. Truong, et. al all claim that the humanity of a patient should be an integral part of medical research, Skloot's narrative style is more effective because it highlights the story of Henrietta Lacks and makes it more accessible to a wider audience by explaining scientific concepts. She uses details about Henrietta Lacks' life, conversational diction, and easily accessible metaphors in order to reveal that the issues surrounding bioethics as a story that touches everyone.

### Activity Three: Outlining the Essay

| Essay Section                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Outline                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Evidence                                                                                                                                                 |
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| <b>Introduction:</b> Introduce two topics being compared, describing the style of each author and lead into the thesis statement. Use the quote from Elie Weisel to connect the topic of humanity introduced by the prompt. | <p>Robert D. Truong "Paying Patients for their Tissues"</p> <p>Skloot "Henrietta's Dance" &amp; "Prologue"</p> <p>Comparing the elements of details, diction, and language from both authors.</p> <p>Skloot's style is a more effective way to highlight the humanity of the story.</p> | <b>Quote from Weisel:</b><br>person as an abstraction                                                                                                    |
| <b>Body Paragraph 1:</b> Discuss #1 element of Skloot's style that will be compared/contrasted.                                                                                                                             | <p>Details.</p> <p>Skloot emphasis facts about Henrietta's life and death to illustrate that she was a person, one whom we can sympathize with.</p>                                                                                                                                     | <b>Examples from Text:</b><br>When Henrietta was diagnosed with cancer, her husband and their five children "three still in diapers, waited in the car." |
| <b>Body Paragraph 2:</b> Discuss the #2 element of Skloot's style that will be compared/contrasted.                                                                                                                         | <p>Diction.</p> <p>Skloot employs diction to show the reader that the science behind HeLa cells should be understood by everyone.</p>                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Examples from Text:</b> "pretty sure she would be shocked", "vicious case", use of first and second person.                                           |
| <b>Body Paragraph 3</b> Discuss the #3 element of Skloot's style that will be compared/contrasted.                                                                                                                          | <p>Figurative Language.</p> <p>Skloot uses figurative language to explain the science in terms that anyone, especially doctors would</p>                                                                                                                                                | <b>Examples from Text:</b><br>Cytoplasm buzzes like a New York City street.                                                                              |

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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <i>understand.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Body Paragraph 4</b> Transition and describe how the science writer's style differs from Skloot's style.                                                                                                                                    | <p>Details:</p> <p><i>Robert Truong and his colleagues use an academic style, which is dissimilar to Skloot because it emphasizes that they are communicating to a specific audience, a scholarly audience.</i></p> | <p><b>Examples from Text:</b></p> <p><i>"Several considerations mitigate against the claim that patients such as Lacks or DF should be offered financial compensation for use of their residual clinical tissue"</i></p>                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Conclusion Paragraph 5</b> Conclusion: Describe the effect of Skloot's emphasis on the story of Henrietta Lacks. What does this portrayal reveal about bioethics, the study of ethic that arises from advancements in science or medicine ? | <p>Restate your claim:</p> <p><i>Skloot's portrayal of Henrietta's story shows that the humanity of bioethics should be emphasized ahead of the medical-industrial complex's race to sell a cure.</i></p>           | <p><b>Call to action:</b> What conclusion should the reader draw from these claims? What should society do as a result of this debate? How is this relevant to society and science/technology?</p> <p><i>Society should be cautious of anytime a human's parts are considered separated from the humanity of the person who created those parts.</i></p> |