

## 10.3.1

## Lesson 12

## Introduction

In this lesson, students read two excerpts from *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. The first is on pages 245–247 from “I think my birth was a miracle” to “didn’t deserve her help as far as I’m concerned.” This excerpt describes Skloot’s encounter with Zakariyya (Henrietta’s son), when he discusses his anger with the Hopkins scientists. The second excerpt is on pages 261–267 from “‘Okay’ Christoph said, looking at Deborah. ‘It must be pretty hard’” to “her arm around me and said, ‘Girl, you just witnessed a miracle.’” In this excerpt, Skloot describes a visit that she, Deborah, and Zakariyya make to Hopkins to meet a scientist, who ends up being surprisingly kind to the Lacks family. After reading and discussion, students respond to a Quick Write that asks them to consider how this excerpt affects Zakariyya’s ideas about the medical community. For homework, students continue with their pre-searches, adding vocabulary to their journals when appropriate.

## Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RI.9-10.5	Analyze in detail how an author’s ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).
Addressed Standard(s)	
W.9-10.9.b	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. b. Apply <i>grades 9–10 Reading standards</i> to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning”).
L.9-10.4.a, c, d	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on <i>grades 9–10 reading and content</i> , choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase c. Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, or its etymology.

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|  | d. Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary). |
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## Assessment

### Assessment(s)

Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson. Students answer the following prompt, citing textual evidence to support analysis and inferences drawn from the text.

- What “miracle” happens in this portion of text, and what effect does it have on the idea that “what them doctors did was wrong” (pp. 245–246)?

### High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Describe how Zakariyya is calm at the end of the chapter, touches Christoph’s shoulder (then Skloot’s) and says “Thank you,” (p. 267).
- Explain why this event may have happened, why it is important, and why Deborah calls it a “miracle” (e.g., Christoph is the first doctor to validate the family’s desire to claim some amount of ownership over Henrietta’s cells; the “miracle” is Zakariyya’s simple gesture of thanking Skloot and Christoph, or Zakariyya’s transformation from the first excerpt to the second one; the “miracle” is Christoph’s kindness, or what Zakariyya learns about Henrietta, or the simple act of seeing Henrietta’s cells in person). Students do not need to explain every possibility, but should back up their reasoning with evidence from the text.
- Discuss how Christoph does not embody the portrait of the medical community Zakariyya paints in the first excerpt, and how this seems to impact the Lacks family’s concept of the medical community.

## Vocabulary

### Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- None.

### Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)

- vials (n.) – very small glass or plastic containers used for perfumes, medicines, etc.
- contamination (v.) – the state of being made impure or unsuitable by contact or mixture with something unclean, bad, etc.

## Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<b>Standards &amp; Text:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standards: RI.9-10.5, W.9-10.9.b, L.9-10.4.a, c, d</li> <li>Text: <i>The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks</i>, pp. 245–247 and 261–267</li> </ul>	
<b>Learning Sequence:</b>	
1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda	1. 5%
2. Homework Accountability	2. 10%
3. Reading and Discussion	3. 65%
4. Quick Write	4. 15%
5. Closing	5. 5%

## Materials

- Student copies of the Surfacing Issues Tool (refer to 10.3.1 Lesson 3)
- Student copies of the Pre-Search Tool (refer to 10.3.1 Lesson 8)

## Learning Sequence

How to Use the Learning Sequence	
Symbol	Type of Text & Interpretation of the Symbol
10%	Percentage indicates the percentage of lesson time each activity should take.
no symbol	Plain text indicates teacher action.
	<b>Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.</b>
	<i>Italicized text indicates a vocabulary word.</i>
▶	Indicates student action(s).
☞	Indicates possible student response(s) to teacher questions.
ⓘ	Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.

### Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda

5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standard for this lesson: RI.9-10.5. In this lesson, students engage with two excerpts from *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. The first is on pages 245–247 from “I think my birth was a miracle” to “didn’t deserve her help as far as I’m concerned.” The

second excerpt is on pages 261–267 from “‘Okay’ Christoph said, looking at Deborah. ‘It must be pretty hard’” to “her arm around me and said, ‘Girl, you just witnessed a miracle.’”

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

## Activity 2: Homework Accountability

**10%**

Instruct students to Turn-and-Talk about the sources they found during their pre-searches for homework. Tell students to share three new words they added to their vocabulary journals, as well as a short description of any perspectives they noticed, if the perspectives are apparent in the sources.

- ▶ Students Turn-and-Talk about the sources and three new words they found for homework, and explain the perspective of the authors of those sources, if apparent in the sources.
- 🗨 Student responses will vary by their individual research.

## Activity 3: Reading and Discussion

**65%**

Instruct students to form pairs. Post or project each set of questions below for students to discuss.

Instruct student pairs to read from page 245 (at “I think my birth was a miracle”) to page 247 (at “didn’t deserve her help as far as I’m concerned”), and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class. Remind students to annotate the text as they engage in discussion.

- ① If necessary to support comprehension and fluency, consider using a Masterful Reading of the focus excerpts for the lesson.
- ① This annotation supports students’ engagement with W.9-10.9.b, which addresses the use of textual evidence in writing.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider encouraging students to surface issues from the text (using the Surfacing Issues Tool) if they are struggling to find enough research for a previously selected area of investigation, or if they are becoming disinterested in their research topic.

### Why does Zakariyya think his “birth was a miracle” (p. 245)?

- 🗨 When he was born, his mother—Henrietta Lacks—was “full of tumors” and very sick, but he was born unharmed and healthy (p. 245).

### Why does Zakariyya think what the “doctors did was wrong” (p. 246)? What support does he give for this statement?

- 🗨 He says they stole her cells without her permission and made money off of them. He is angry because now the Lacks family is “‘po’ as po’,” when they should have made money off of Henrietta’s cells (p. 246).

**As Zakariyya points out, many doctors argue that Henrietta’s cells helped many people. What is his response to this claim?**

- Zakariyya says that even though the cells helped many others, they did not help the Lacks family, and they did not help Henrietta. Now, he says, they “can’t even go see a doctor cause [they] can’t afford it,” but the people who “stole” her cells are rich because of it (pp. 246–247).

**How would you describe Zakariyya’s emotions in this passage? Why?**

- He is irritable and angry. He curses and yells a lot, he “snap[s] back,” and he stands over Skloot, “yelling” about George Gey (p. 246).

**Based on his tone and what he says in this passage, what is Zakariyya’s opinion of doctors?**

- Zakariyya hates the people who “stole” Henrietta’s cells, and thinks that if God “wants to provide a disease cure, He’d provide a cure of his own, it’s not for man to tamper with” (p. 246). He says that if George Gey “were here right now, I’d kill him dead” (p. 246). Zakariyya clearly does not like or trust doctors, especially the ones involved with the removal of Henrietta’s cells or HeLa.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

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Instruct student pairs to read from page 261 (at “‘Okay’ Christoph said, looking at Deborah. ‘It must be pretty hard’”) to page 267 (at “her arm around me and said, ‘Girl, you just witnessed a miracle’”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

- ① To contextualize this portion of text, consider telling students that Skloot, Deborah (Henrietta’s daughter), and Zakariyya (Henrietta’s son) are visiting Hopkins Hospital to see Henrietta’s cells in person. Cristoph is the doctor who is showing them the cells.

**How are the HeLA cells contained? What are *vials*?**

- The cells are contained in a very cold freezer in “thousands of inch-tall plastic *vials*” (p. 262). *Vials* are small containers used to hold liquid.

**Why are the cells stored in an “extra room” all by themselves (p. 262)?**

- To avoid *contamination* from other substances.

**What does *contamination* mean in this passage?**

- *Contamination* means that another substance gets into the cells or the cells get into another substance causing impurity or ruining the cells.

**What does Zakariyya do as Christoph is explaining how cells work?**

- 🗨 Zakariyya turns up his hearing aid and leans in (p. 264).

**How is Zakariyya’s behavior different in this passage compared to the first passage?**

- 🗨 He is much less angry; he is quiet, calm, and interested. When Christoph shows them the cells on the screen, Zakariyya stares like he has “gone into a trance” (p. 265).

**What does Christoph say that stuns Deborah?**

- 🗨 Christoph says that he thinks “Hopkins pretty much screwed up” (p. 266).

**Explain the nature and tone of Christoph’s interaction with Deborah and Zakariyya.**

- 🗨 Christoph is very kind to both Deborah and Zakariyya; he patiently explains how cells work, and shows them their mother’s cells. He says, “I don’t blame you for being angry” (p. 266), and agrees with them that they “should get the money. At least some of it” from the HeLa profits, (p. 267). Overall, he is very kind to them, unlike other scientists with whom they have interacted.

**How would you characterize Deborah and Zakariyya’s reaction to Christoph?**

- 🗨 Both of them seem shocked and “stunned” (p. 266) by his point of view and how kind and welcoming Christoph is; Deborah is more understanding with Christoph than with others at Hopkins: “Deborah looked like she wanted to hug him. ‘This is amazing,’ she said, shaking her head and looking at him like he was a mirage” (p. 266).

**What is Christoph’s perspective about how HeLa profits should be handled? How does he compare cells to oil (p. 267)?**

- 🗨 Christoph thinks that the Lacks family should be getting “at least some” of the profits from Henrietta’s cells. He says “Why not treat valuable cells like oil . . . When you find oil on somebody’s property it doesn’t automatically belong to them, but they do get a portion of the profits” (p. 267).

**What does Zakariyya do before leaving the hospital?**

- 🗨 He “reach[es] up and touch[es] Christoph on the back” and thanks him (p. 267). Then he does the same thing to Skloot.

**How do Deborah and Skloot react to this?**

- 🗨 They stand “in silence,” and Deborah says, “Girl, you just witnessed a miracle” (p. 267).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

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Instruct student pairs to discuss the following question and write a brief response on a separate sheet of paper before sharing out with the class.

**Describe Zakariyya in the first and second excerpt in this lesson.**

- In the first excerpt, Zakariyya is very loud and angry with the medical community, and he curses a lot: “It’s the highest degree of disrespect. That’s why I say I hope he burn in hell.” In the second excerpt, he is calmer and gentler. He “lean[s] close,” to listen to Christoph explain cells (p. 264), and he is silent most of the visit. When he does begin to “[yell] something about George Gey,” he quickly stops when Deborah “thump[s] her cane on his toe” (p. 266). Overall, Zakariyya seems taken aback by Christoph’s kindness.

### Activity 4: Quick Write

**15%**

Instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

**What “miracle” happens in this portion of text, and what effect does it have on the idea that “what them doctors did was wrong” (pp. 245–246)?**

Instruct students to look at their annotations to find evidence. Ask students to use this lesson’s vocabulary wherever possible in their written responses. Remind students to use the Short Response Rubric and Checklist to guide their written responses.

- ▶ Students listen and read the Quick Write prompt.

① Display the prompt for students to see, or provide the prompt in hard copy.

Transition to the independent Quick Write.

- ▶ Students independently answer the prompt, using evidence from the text.
- See the High Performance Response at the beginning of this lesson.

### Activity 5: Closing

**5%**

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to continue with their pre-searches. Ask students to find three more potential sources and record the following information on a Pre-Search Tool: author’s name, topic, source, location, publication date, and general content/key ideas. Instruct students to continue to consider an author’s perspective, and, when

appropriate, summarize it in the margins of the Pre-Search Tool. Finally, instruct students to continue adding to their vocabulary journal when appropriate.

- ▶ Students listen.
- ① Consider reminding students to use the vocabulary strategies in standards L.9-10.4.a, c, d when completing the vocabulary journal.
- ① Consider distributing more Pre-Search Tools if necessary.

## Homework

Continue with your pre-searches. Find three more potential sources and record the following information on the Pre-Search Tool: author's name, topic, source, location, publication date, and general content/key ideas. Consider an author's perspective and, when appropriate, summarize it in the margins of the Pre-Search Tool. Continue adding to your vocabulary journal when appropriate.