

ELA LESSON PLAN: The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, Lesson One

ELA LESSON Overview	Introduction to <i>The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks</i> (lesson #1 of 4)	
Unit	<i>The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks:</i> An Introduction to Jim Crow and the Great Migrations	
Lesson Length	Three hours (can be split up over 2–3 sessions)	
Class	ELA, Pre-ASE/GLE 4–8, STAR, CCRSAE C & D	
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STAGE 1 – PLANNING for DESIRED RESULTS		
LESSON OBJECTIVES — <i>By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a personal narrative from an organizer that parallels the process they will use for the final project. • Accurately explain chapter structure of <i>The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks</i>. • Accurately describe the Final Project. 		
Level-Specific CCR Standards that support and align with the Lesson Objectives	CCRSAE Instructional Shifts addressed in this lesson	
W.2.C.a: Introduce a topic clearly and group related information in paragraphs and sections; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.	Practice with complex text and its academic language	
Guiding Question	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ground reading, writing, and speaking in evidence from literary and informational texts.	
How do you approach the task of creating a detailed narrative that introduces an individual in the context of their experiences and history?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Build knowledge through content-rich nonfiction.	
PRIOR KNOWLEDGE NEEDED: None		
STAGE 2 – EVIDENCE of LEARNING		
<i>Ways that students and I will know the extent to which objectives have been met:</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students accurately complete the Personal Narrative Template. 		
STAGE 3 – ACTION		
INTRODUCTION — <i>Why is this important for students to learn? (hook, connection, relevance)</i>		
Understanding history/historical experience is relevant to help us understand how we arrived here—in our circumstances, in our time—and to help analyze how our choices might affect where we will end up. Understanding the African American experience from slavery to today is an important part of understanding American history. We can use the engaging story of a single individual, Henrietta Lacks, to study Jim Crow and the Great Migrations, two big themes in the extended history of African-Americans in America.		

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MAIN ACTIVITIES

Each activity listed here is described in detail in the Lesson Narrative Guide, with times and materials.

Write a Personal Narrative

- Students add personal information to an **organizer**. Some they will know; some they may have to gather from family members.
- Students use the information on the organizer to write a Personal Narrative.

Medical Research Scenario

- Students react, through discussion, to a **scenario** that roughly parallels the experience of Henrietta Lacks.
- Students complete a **journal** entry about the scenario.

Introduction to the Book

- Students are introduced to the structure of the book.
- Students watch **videos** that introduce the author and her reasons for being drawn to the material.
- Students are introduced to the vocabulary for the unit (**slide show & handout**)

NOTES TO THE TEACHER

The only need for differentiation is the need to let students know that they can omit information they don't want shared from the Personal Narrative. The Medical Research Scenario is scaffolded as part of the teaching.

This lesson is an introduction, so evidence of the CCRS Instructional Shifts are in the lessons that follow.

Opportunities for students to practice the ELA skills of Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language:

- Students will complete an organizer that will be used to create a multi-paragraph narrative.
- Students will have the opportunity to interview family members to gather information for the narrative.
- Students will participate in a group discussion about a complex (and potentially emotional) topic in medical ethics.

NOTE: After teaching this lesson, add a *Reflection* on what to remember when teaching it again, including what adaptations you would make.

Useful documents on the SABES website:

[“Standards-Aligned Classroom”](#), [“Instructional Planning Guide for ELA”](#), [“Three Key Shifts”](#)