

### DIDLS for “Henrietta’s Dance”

Rebecca Skloot, like all writers, has a unique style. Style is the combination of the writer’s choices, which are made to achieve a certain purpose. Use the graphic organizer below to analyze Skloot’s style.

As you read, look for these details...			How do you know? Cite specific evidence from the text.
<b>D</b>	<b>Diction:</b> author’s choice of words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look for choice of strong words. Do you notice any repetition or patterns in the word choice? What do these words reveal about how the author feels about the subject?</li> </ul> <p><i>Skloot uses concrete, informal vocabulary to show that this is a story that can apply to anyone.</i></p>	<p><i>Skloot describes the cells as “growing” instead of being “cultivated”. She also referred to one researcher’s hypothesis as a “nasty rumor.”</i></p>
<b>I</b>	<b>Imagery:</b> Use of descriptions that appeal to the senses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What images are especially vivid? To what senses do these images appeal? How do these images affect your mood as a reader?</li> </ul> <p><i>The scene for Henrietta’s burial as in an unmarked grave is as descriptive as a novel. The same can be said for when the Henrietta’s daughter-in-law found out about the cells.</i></p>	<p>Henrietta’s grave is described as “across the street” from a “tobacco field” in an “unmarked grave” where “cattle roam.”</p> <p><i>The dinner party where Henrietta’s daughter-in-law found out about her cells was described as at a “mahogany table” and lit with “soft light.”</i></p>

D	<b>Details:</b> Facts included or those omitted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What details are emphasized or repeated? Look for facts. Are there any details that have been left out? How do the included details affect your mood as a reader?</li> </ul> <p><i>Skloot emphasis details about Henrietta and her family.</i></p>	<p>How do you know? Cite specific evidence from the text.</p> <p><i>Much of the article is dedicated to Henrietta’s point-of-view. Skloot shows the reader how they waited outside the hospital and how they were shocked about the research. The author even chooses to tell us that the day the doctors announced they may have found a way to “wipe out cancer”, “Henrietta’s body lay in the morgue.”</i></p>
L	<b>Figurative Language:</b> Describe the use of figurative language in the text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What connections does the author make with figurative language? How does the language affect your mood as a reader?</li> </ul> <p><i>Author uses personification, showing the cells as strong and powerful. This shows that even as Henrietta died, her cells were living on.</i></p>	<p>How do you know? Cite specific evidence from the text.</p> <p><i>Skloot describes the cells as “latched to the sides of the test tubes” and how they “sat in a nuclear test site.”</i></p>
S	<b>Syntax:</b> The way sentences are constructed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are sentences short or long? What do these structures indicate about the author?</li> </ul> <p><i>The sentences are mostly short with examples of parallelism. The syntax emphasizes that this is a story about an ordinary woman that applies to everyone. The parallelism is used to stress just how far the cells reached and how little doctors knew about the person behind the cells.</i></p>	<p>How do you know? Cite specific evidence from the text.</p> <p><i>“Then the film went blank.” “Then came the news: the tumor was malignant.”</i></p> <p><i>The cells “went out to ... Minnesota, New York, Chile, Russia,...” “But they knew the barest facts about Henrietta: She was black, she was a woman, and she was dead.</i></p>

TONE	<b>Tone:</b> The writer's attitude or toward the subject.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on your analysis above, how would you describe the author's tone? Sarcastic? Objective? Angry? Romantic? Urgent? Serious? Clinical? Lofty? How would you read the passage aloud if you were the author?</li> </ul> Somber tone	<i>Overall, the author uses a somber, neutral tone that while Skloot wants to tell the story of Henrietta. She also wants to show her audience that this is a serious, sad subject.</i>
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Each author uses word choice, sentence structure, and figurative language to create a unique style that will speak to specific audiences, occasions or purposes. Consider the words below, which would describe Skloot's style?

Objective

Opinionated

Academic

Narrative

Nostalgic

Cynical

Humorous

Was Skloot's style an effective way to portray the story of HeLa cells? Explain your answer by describing how the style did or did not achieve Skloot's purpose.

Skloot used a narrative style to convey the story of Henrietta and cell cultivation. The use of personification and imagery show that Skloot wanted her readers to visualize the story. She also emphasized details about Henrietta and her family. In telling the story, she uses simple syntax to further her purpose: persuade readers that the story of HeLa is intertwined with the story of Henrietta.