

“Prologue” Handout

Skloot’s Claim	Textual Evidence	Evaluate Claim
What does the author believe? What are the main points in the article?	What sentences, paragraphs, details in the text support this claim?	Is this claim supported by sufficient evidence? Is the evidence strong enough to support the claim? Does it address opposing viewpoints?
<i>Henrietta and her family were taken advantage of by science.</i>	<i>“All of the stories mentioned that scientists had begun doing research on Henrietta’s children, but the Lackses didn’t seem to know what that research was for.”</i>	<i>Even Skloot’s biology teacher didn’t know much about Henrietta. It’s a strong claim, but it is weakened by the fact that Skloot does not address any opposing viewpoints.</i>
<i>HeLa cells are an important medical breakthrough.</i>	<i>“HeLa cells were one of the most important things that happened to medicine in the last hundred years,” Defler said.</i>	<i>There is a list of diseases that have been researched with HeLa cells. However, there is no address of any opposing viewpoints.</i>
<i>Rebecca Skloot is fascinated by Henrietta’s story.</i>	<i>I became fixated on the idea of someday telling Henrietta’s story.</i>	<i>This claim is an important part of the prologue, because it explains why Skloot wrote the book.</i>

Evaluation of Claim: Use the sentence frame below to guide you while you write a response to one of Skloot’s claims. Remember to use third person (no you or I) and write in present tense.

In ___ the prologue to *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* ___ (title) ___ Rebecca Skloot ___ (author) ___ proves ___ (strong signal verb)*

that ___ HeLa cells were an important medical breakthrough ___ (claims). She

supports her claim by stating quoting her biology professor Donald Defler, who said, “*HeLa cells were one of the most important things that happened to medicine in the last hundred years.*” This is an effective/ineffective claim because she

is quoting a professor and even though she doesn't provide any counter claims, the professor supplies this knowledge as if it were common knowledge.