

Investigating Science through Story

Context: Science literacy is an important component of lifelong science learning, sense making, and critique. *How do we make complex and current science content relevant, accessible, and personal?* Students will deconstruct the genre of science narrative, a type of creative nonfiction (CNF), through reading Rebecca Skloot’s *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* and other articles. Students will research, investigate, and evaluate a personally relevant scientific topic and compose a piece of creative nonfiction modeled after Skloot’s text.

Project: Students complete a 500-800 word CNF piece and transform it into a magazine layout for an article to be published in a class ‘zine, or a vod/podcast inspired by NPR’s *Science Friday*, an infographic, or a children’s book.

Approach: In *Investigating Science through Story*, the focus is on helping students deconstruct an unfamiliar literary genre and learn about the characteristics and strategies that authors of this genre employ. Students explore an assortment of nonfiction writing, discuss the credibility of sources, and synthesize information from a variety of websites to gather research on a science topic of their interest. Students write a pitch for their CNF piece and then translate their narrative into a culminating project, which they will present to an audience of their peers, community, and professionals.

Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC) Template Tasks: Students engage in extended science reading as they write a science narrative.

LDC Task: After reading *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* and informational texts about a science topic of your choice, write a compelling science narrative that relates an interesting angle on your topic. Use braided narrative, the Five Rs of Creative Nonfiction, and rigorous scientific research to develop your work. **(Narrative/Description)**

Expert Involvement: The first experience with an expert is an informal introduction exchange. Experts are involved throughout the unit with contributions to the students’ brainstorming and project idea selection process, as well as providing writing support throughout the course. Experts may opt to Skype in during the final presentation.

Digital Tools: Microsoft Office or equivalent; Google Docs or equivalent; Audacity, Garage Band, or equivalent; Adobe InDesign or equivalent, or video editing software.

Primary Standards: CC Writing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.8 Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.