

**Resources for teaching about eugenics past, present and future**  
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**Fiction:**

[Brave New World](#) by Aldous Huxley

Important lessons:

- Using science and technology to enhance and improve one's life, one must not forget the fundamentals of what makes human human.
- The kind of world dominated by big pharma and human enhancement technology.
- The socioeconomic stratification technology creates.
- Characters like Helmholtz **Watson**, **Lenina** Crowne and Bernard **Marx** allow for the book to be read through a historical lens. (as in John B. Watson, Vladimir Lenin, and Karl Marx)
- With Huxley writing the novel in 1931 (start of the Great Depression, shortly after Galton's eugenics ~ 1915), it has a unique historical context. This is a great book to be taught in a history course.

[Frankenstein](#) by Mary Shelley

Important Lessons:

- Risks of tampering with nature's unique order.
- Role of the expert. One can often be blinded by an obsession for innovation.
- Human connection and cultural element - the creature wants cultural connectedness.
- A good introduction to reading a novel through a feminist lens as well.
- Written during the 1880s, Shelley uses great historical language as well.

**Non-Fiction** (may be appropriate for a history class)

[A Whisper Past - Childless After Eugenic Sterilization in Alberta](#) by Leilani Muir

Important Lessons:

- Adds a personal narrative to the history of eugenic sterilization.
- Shows the reality and stigma of institutionalization.
- Application of blanket terms like "feeble-minded" and "moron" by the eugenics board.
- Poverty and abuse viewed as mental deficiency.

[The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks](#) - Rebecca Skloot

Important Lessons:

- She was a poor black tobacco farmer whose cells—taken without her knowledge in 1951—became one of the most important tools in medicine, vital for developing the polio vaccine, cloning, gene mapping, and more.
- Interesting reading through the lenses of race, gender, personal property and privacy.