

Weekly Paragraph:

Should the government fund stem cell research?

In summer 2003, toddler Kai Harriott of Boston was sitting on her porch, singing with her sister. A gang member shot into the air to scare Kai's neighbors. Kai was hit by a bullet. After being shot, Kai was paralyzed. She could not move from the waist down. Because of her injury, Kai must use a wheelchair. Scientists have a theory that stem cells can someday help people like Kai.

Stem cells are found in different parts of the human body, including in our blood. Stem cells are also found in fertilized human eggs, called embryos. Stem cells from embryos can develop into cells that do many different jobs in the human body. With more research, we may be able to grow replacement parts for humans from stem cells.

If doctors can grow spinal cord cells, people like Kai might walk again. New brain cells could help people who have had strokes or Alzheimer's. Scientists might also learn to grow the cells that make insulin. This could help people with diabetes. But to obtain stem cells, scientists must destroy a human embryo.

Many people think that human life begins when an egg is fertilized. They think destroying a human embryo is murder. They say scientists should only work with stem cells from adults. But stem cells from adults won't grow into many different kinds of human cells. Stem cells from embryos may be our only hope of curing diseases. Investigating stem cells will take years and cost millions. Should the government pay for stem cell research?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Focus Word Chart - Week 7

<i>Word</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Forms</i>	<i>Examples of Use</i>	<i>Notes</i>
embryo	(n.) - new organism in a mother's womb			
paralyzed	(adj.) - unable to move			
theory	(n.) - a hunch or unproven idea			
investigate	(v.) - trying to learn about			
	obtain			