

HIDDEN FIGURES

PRETTY CURIOUS RESOURCE

ACTIVE VIEWING GUIDE FOR CLUBS



SUPPORTED BY:



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RESOURCE PRODUCED BY:

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ACTIVE VIEWING
GUIDE FOR CLUBS

ABOUT THIS GUIDE:

This resource is designed to be delivered over several club sessions to support the viewing of the film *Hidden Figures*. You can either use all of the suggested activities or cherry-pick the ones that most suit your group and available time. Alternatively, it could be viewed in class, if you wish.

ABOUT THE FILM:

Set in the early 1960s as NASA vied with the USSR for supremacy in the Space race, *Hidden Figures* is based on the true story of three African American mathematicians who contributed to the success of the first American to orbit Earth. Part of a women-only team performing mathematical calculations, Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan and Mary Jackson are seen battling racial and gender barriers at a time when the Civil Rights Movement was at its height. Suffering segregation when working, eating and going to the bathroom, it is not until the all-male research team request more help with their mission that the women are seen as equals and begin to breakdown the discriminative culture around them. Inspirational and uplifting, the film shines a light on a lesser known yet culturally important story about diversity during a key moment in America's history.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Your copy of *Hidden Figures* on DVD
- Colouring pencils/pen
- Poster paper.

SUGGESTED STRUCTURE:

- **Session one:** Introduce the film and view the first 40 minutes of it. Complete the activity if time allows.
- **Session two:** Watch the next section of the film and complete the activity if you wish.
- **Session three:** Watch the rest of the film and complete the **Review writing activity**.
- **Session four and beyond:** Try the **Filmmaking activity** over the next few club sessions.



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SESSION ONE:

Watch from the beginning of the film to 00:39:32.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it so important that the US got a man into space at this time?
2. What do we learn about the professional and personal lives of Katherine G. Johnson, Mary Vaughan and Mary Jackson?
3. The film is set in 1962 when life in the US was segregated (Caucasian and African-American people living separate lives). How is this shown in the film?

ACTIVITY

Choose a character from the film to create a profile for. Add as much detail as you can remember from the film, in addition to using the internet to research their lives.

TAKING IT FURTHER

Members can present their character profile creatively as a poster, short film or animation.

SESSION TWO:

Watch the film from 00:39:33 to 01:19:43.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

1. How does each woman get around the barriers that prevent them from getting ahead in the workplace?
2. What is the importance of their friendships with each other?
3. Re-watch Katherine's speech in the Space Task Group office after she is scolded for going to the bathroom. What different camera shots are used and how can we tell what each character is thinking or feeling?

ACTIVITY

Write a voiceover explaining what Katherine is thinking when she is running to use the ladies room in the West Campus.

Young people should try to include her thoughts on her new role in the Space Task Group, her colleagues and the issues that she is having.

Members can read their voiceovers over the scene playing on mute in the background.

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SESSION THREE:

Watch the remainder of the film (from 01:19:43).

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

1. Do you feel that the ending was satisfactory? Would you change it in any way?
2. What do you think the intended message of the story was?
3. Why do you think that this film won so many awards when it was released?

REVIEW WRITING ACTIVITY

Ask your members to write their reviews of *Hidden Figures*. There is guidance for writing good film reviews on the Into Film website at www.intofilm.org/resources/154.

You could submit your members' reviews to the Review of the Week competition. More details can be found at www.intofilm.org/clubs/review-of-the-week.

SESSION FOUR AND BEYOND:

FILMMAKING ACTIVITY

- In groups, students can plan a short film based on revealing the importance of the life and/or work of somebody. This person could have historical or cultural significance, or they could be a relative or friend.
- Ask members to refer to the **Into Film filmmaking pages** for guidance and exemplar films made by young people to use as inspiration. They can also submit their completed films into the Film of the Month competition.

www.intofilm.org/films/filmmaking

www.intofilm.org/competitions/1