

# A Computer Called Katherine

## Lesson Objectives:

At the end of the lesson, the students will be able to listen and respond verbally to informative texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and draw inferences from the text.

## Teacher Activity:

Please review the background vocabulary with the students.

1. **Segregation** – Separation because of skin color. In the book, a statement is made “But back then, American was legally segregated by race.” Give specific examples of segregation that existed when Katherine was young (schools, bathrooms, etc.)
2. **NASA** – National Aeronautics and Space Administration
3. **Soviet Union (USSR)** – No longer exists but a large part became Russia again in 1991. Find it on a map.

## **Important People**

**Katherine Johnson**

**Alan Shepard**

**John Glenn**

**Neil Armstrong**

## **Setting the Purpose:**

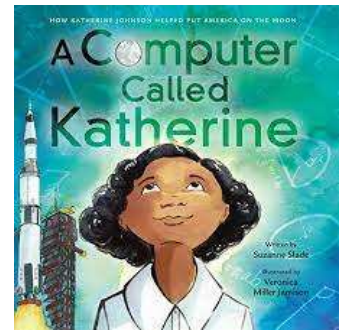
Teachers, please show the book that they will be reading today. Please do not pre-read the book with the class; we want the story to be as engaging as possible for the kids when the volunteers read it.

Lead-in questions for the students:

1. Can you predict what this book will be about based on the cover?
2. Can you predict how Katherine Johnson helped the astronauts get to the moon?
3. Are there any women in your life who inspire you?
4. What makes someone inspiring?

## Volunteer Activity:

1. Before beginning the story, tell the students you have some questions you would like them to think about while listening:
  - a. Who in the story showed courage?
  - b. Who in the story showed kindness?



2. Read the story all the way through without stopping.
3. After you read the story, ask the following questions using the cooperative learning discussion format.

**Volunteer Questions:**

1. Who was Katherine and what were some of her special talents?
2. What did people expect Katherine to do because she was a woman?
3. What were some of the obstacles that Katherine had to overcome to become a mathematician and work for NASA?
4. How do we know that Katherine Johnson was important to the Apollo 13 mission?
5. Did anyone in the story show courage?
6. Did anyone in the story show kindness?
7. Who were Alan Shepard, John Glenn, and Neil Armstrong and why did they have to trust Katherine?

**Supplemental Activity for Teachers, after the volunteer leaves:**

1. Do a character analysis.
  1. From her actions I can tell...
  2. From her words I can tell...
  3. From her behavior I can tell...
2. For supplemental viewing watch Black Pioneers: Katherine Johnson  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aR8WhKCC8w>
3. Sequencing activity