

hidden figures viewing guide answer key

Hidden figures viewing guide answer key is a valuable resource for educators, students, and anyone interested in understanding the historical significance and themes of the film "Hidden Figures." This movie, released in 2016, highlights the crucial contributions of three African American women—Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan, and Mary Jackson—who played vital roles at NASA during the early years of the United States space program. This guide aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the film, offering insights into key scenes, character development, and important themes that emerge throughout the story.

Overview of Hidden Figures

"Hidden Figures" is based on the book of the same name by Margot Lee Shetterly. The film chronicles the lives of three brilliant women who worked as mathematicians and engineers at NASA during the 1960s, a time when racial segregation and gender discrimination were rampant in the United States. The movie underscores not only their professional achievements but also the social challenges they faced.

Plot Summary

The film is set against the backdrop of the Space Race between the United States and the Soviet Union. It follows the journey of:

1. Katherine Johnson (played by Taraji P. Henson): A brilliant mathematician who calculates flight trajectories for space missions, including John Glenn's historic orbit of Earth.
2. Dorothy Vaughan (played by Octavia Spencer): A skilled programmer and the first African American supervisor at NASA, who learns and teaches others about the new IBM computers.
3. Mary Jackson (played by Janelle Monáe): An aspiring engineer who fights for the right to attend night classes at an all-white school to further her education.

The film weaves together their personal and professional lives, showcasing their resilience, intelligence, and the importance of collaboration.

Key Themes

"Hidden Figures" explores several significant themes that resonate with audiences and provide rich material for discussion.

1. Overcoming Adversity

The film powerfully illustrates the struggles the main characters face due to systemic racism and

sexism. Despite the obstacles in their paths, they persist in their quest for equality and recognition. Key moments that exemplify this theme include:

- Katherine's struggle to gain respect in a male-dominated environment.
- Dorothy's determination to learn programming and teach her colleagues.
- Mary's fight to secure her right to education and professional advancement.

2. The Importance of Collaboration

The film emphasizes that progress is often achieved through teamwork and mutual support. The relationships between the three women, as well as their interactions with their colleagues, highlight the power of collaboration. Notable examples include:

- Katherine's collaboration with her male colleagues, leading to a groundbreaking achievement in space travel.
- Dorothy's mentorship of other women in the programming field.
- Mary's partnership with her husband, who supports her ambitions.

3. The Role of Education

Education is a recurring motif in "Hidden Figures." The characters' dedication to learning and self-improvement is central to their success. Key points include:

- Katherine's pursuit of advanced mathematics and her ability to apply it in a practical setting.
- Dorothy's self-education in programming and her initiative to teach others.
- Mary's determination to attend classes, which exemplifies the importance of education in overcoming barriers.

Character Analysis

The film's characters are richly developed, each embodying different aspects of the struggles faced by women and people of color in the 1960s.

Katherine Johnson

Katherine is the film's protagonist, showcasing brilliance and resilience. Her character arc includes:

- Initial isolation in a predominantly white and male workspace.
- Earning the respect of her colleagues, particularly through her calculations for John Glenn's mission.
- A pivotal scene where she stands up to her supervisor, demanding access to the men's restroom, symbolizing her fight for dignity.

Dorothy Vaughan

Dorothy is portrayed as a resourceful leader. Her journey includes:

- Transitioning from a mathematician to a computer programmer.
- Her proactive approach in learning about the new IBM computer, ensuring job security for herself and her team.
- The moment she becomes a supervisor, which highlights her leadership skills and the breaking of racial barriers.

Mary Jackson

Mary's character represents ambition and determination. Key aspects of her journey are:

- Her fight against educational barriers, advocating for her right to attend an all-white school.
- Balancing family responsibilities with her professional aspirations.
- Her eventual success as an engineer, which serves as an inspiration for future generations.

Important Scenes and Discussion Questions

Several scenes in "Hidden Figures" are pivotal for understanding the film's message and themes. Here are some key scenes and corresponding discussion questions.

1. The Restroom Incident

In a powerful scene, Katherine confronts her supervisor about the segregated restrooms, leading to a memorable moment of defiance.

- Discussion Question: What does this scene reveal about the systemic racism of the time and Katherine's character development?

2. The Orbital Flight Calculation

Katherine's calculations for John Glenn's flight are a climax of the film, showcasing her intellect and determination.

- Discussion Question: How does this moment reflect the broader theme of overcoming adversity in the film?

3. Dorothy's Promotion

Dorothy's promotion to a supervisory position signifies a breakthrough for African American women in the workplace.

- Discussion Question: What does this promotion signify about changing attitudes towards race and gender in the workplace during the 1960s?

4. Mary's Court Case

Mary's struggle to attend an all-white school is a critical moment that reflects her ambition and the barriers faced by many.

- Discussion Question: How does Mary's fight for education resonate with contemporary issues regarding access to education?

Conclusion

The hidden figures viewing guide answer key serves as a comprehensive resource for educators and students seeking to deepen their understanding of the film "Hidden Figures." By examining the plot, themes, character development, and significant scenes, viewers can appreciate the historical context and the personal stories of Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan, and Mary Jackson. The film not only honors their contributions to NASA but also serves as a reminder of the importance of resilience, education, and collaboration in overcoming social and professional barriers. Through thoughtful discussion and analysis, audiences can reflect on the enduring impact of these hidden figures on American history and the ongoing journey toward equality.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main theme of the film 'Hidden Figures'?

The main theme of 'Hidden Figures' is the struggle for equality and recognition faced by African American women in the workforce, particularly in the fields of science and technology during the 1960s.

Who are the three main characters in 'Hidden Figures'?

The three main characters are Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan, and Mary Jackson, who are all mathematicians working at NASA.

How does the film depict the challenges of racial segregation?

The film illustrates the challenges of racial segregation through scenes that show the characters

dealing with discriminatory practices, such as separate bathrooms and restricted access to facilities.

What significant project do the women contribute to in the movie?

The women contribute to the Project Mercury space program, specifically in calculating flight trajectories for astronaut John Glenn's historic orbit around the Earth.

What role does teamwork play in 'Hidden Figures'?

Teamwork is crucial in 'Hidden Figures', as the characters support each other through personal and professional challenges, showcasing the power of collaboration in overcoming obstacles.

How does 'Hidden Figures' address gender equality?

The film addresses gender equality by highlighting the professional achievements of women in a male-dominated field and their fight for recognition and equal opportunities.

What impact did Katherine Johnson have on NASA's success?

Katherine Johnson's calculations were vital for the success of several NASA missions, including the first American manned spaceflight, showcasing her remarkable mathematical skills.

What is the significance of the title 'Hidden Figures'?

The title 'Hidden Figures' signifies the overlooked contributions of African American women mathematicians whose work was critical to NASA's success but remained largely unrecognized for many years.

How does the film portray the importance of education and mentorship?

The film portrays education and mentorship as essential components for success, highlighting how the characters support each other's growth and learning in a challenging environment.

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