

# Who Is The Great Katherine Johnson? Celebrating the Legacy of an African American STEM Pioneer

: Unveiling the Hidden Figure





## WHO IS THE GREAT KATHERINE JOHNSON, AFRICAN AMERICAN TEEN BOOK: AFRICAN AMERICAN TEENAGE BOOK by Ellen Labrecque

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 1856 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 70 pages
Lending	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported



In the realm of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), the name Katherine Johnson stands out as a beacon of inspiration. As a gifted African American mathematician, she played a pivotal role in some of NASA's most groundbreaking missions, including the Apollo 11 moon landing. Yet, her story remained largely untold until the release of the acclaimed book 'Hidden Figures' in 2016, which shed light on the extraordinary contributions of Johnson and other unsung African American female mathematicians at NASA.

Building upon the legacy of 'Hidden Figures,' the African American teen book 'Who Is the Great Katherine Johnson?' provides a comprehensive and engaging account of Johnson's life and achievements. This article delves into the key themes and insights from the book, offering a deeper understanding of her indomitable spirit, brilliance, and unwavering determination.

## **Early Life and Education: Nurturing a Mathematical Mind**

Katherine Johnson was born in 1918 in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. From a tender age, she exhibited an exceptional aptitude for mathematics, often surpassing her older classmates. Her thirst for knowledge led her to break down racial barriers and enroll in the renowned West Virginia State College, where she excelled in mathematics and physics.

## **Breaking Barriers as a Black Woman in STEM**

Despite her brilliance, Johnson's path was not without challenges. As an African American woman, she faced systemic discrimination and prejudice throughout her career. She was forced to overcome countless obstacles, including being assigned to segregated workspaces and denied equal opportunities. However, Johnson's unwavering determination and belief in her abilities fueled her to persevere.

## **Trailblazing Contributions to NASA: From Calculating Trajectories to Lunar Missions**

In 1953, Johnson joined NASA's predecessor, the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA). She quickly became a valuable asset to the team, using her mathematical prowess to calculate trajectories, predict orbital paths, and ensure the success of space missions. Her meticulous work and unwavering accuracy played a crucial role in sending Alan Shepard into space and Neil Armstrong to the moon.

## **Beyond Calculations: A Symbol of Resilience and Perseverance**

Johnson's legacy extends far beyond her mathematical calculations. Her story embodies the resilience and perseverance of African Americans in the

face of adversity. She became an inspiration to countless young people, particularly girls and students of color, demonstrating that with determination and hard work, anything is possible.

## **'Who Is the Great Katherine Johnson?': A Book That Inspires**

The African American teen book 'Who Is the Great Katherine Johnson?' captures the essence of Johnson's life and contributions in a captivating and accessible manner. Written by renowned author and historian Joyce Mosley, the book provides a comprehensive account of Johnson's journey, from her humble beginnings to her groundbreaking achievements.

Through vivid prose and compelling storytelling, 'Who Is the Great Katherine Johnson?' brings Johnson's character to life, highlighting her intelligence, courage, and the impact she had on the world. The book also explores the broader context of race, gender, and the challenges faced by African Americans in the mid-20th century.

## **: A Legacy of Inspiration and Empowerment**

Katherine Johnson's life is a testament to the power of human determination and the transformative potential of education. Her story continues to inspire generations of young people, encouraging them to pursue their passions, break down barriers, and strive for excellence. The African American teen book 'Who Is the Great Katherine Johnson?' serves as a valuable resource for educators, parents, and anyone seeking to foster a love of STEM among young minds.

By delving into the life and achievements of this extraordinary woman, we not only celebrate her legacy but also empower future generations to reach for the stars and make their own contributions to the world.



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