

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	Bischoff	School:	OLMS
Book Title:	Hidden Figures	Genre:	Historical Fiction
Author:	368Margot Lee Shetterly	Pages:	368
Publisher:	HarperCollins Publishers	Copyright:	2016

In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.

Book Summary and summary citation: (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

Soon to be a major motion picture starring Golden Globe–winner Taraji P. Henson and Academy Award–winners Octavia Spencer and Kevin Costner

Set against the backdrop of the Jim Crow South and the civil rights movement, the never-before-told true story of NASA's African-American female mathematicians who played a crucial role in America's space program—and whose contributions have been unheralded, until now.

Before John Glenn orbited the Earth or Neil Armstrong walked on the moon, a group of professionals worked as “Human Computers,” calculating the flight paths that would enable these historic achievements. Among these were a coterie of bright, talented African-American women. Segregated from their white counterparts by Jim Crow laws, these “colored computers,” as they were known, used slide rules, adding machines, and pencil and paper to support America's fledgling aeronautics industry, and helped write the equations that would launch rockets, and astronauts, into space.

Drawing on the oral histories of scores of these “computers,” personal recollections, interviews with NASA executives and engineers, archival documents, correspondence, and reporting from the era, *Hidden Figures* recalls America's greatest adventure and NASA's groundbreaking successes through the experiences of five spunky, courageous, intelligent, determined, and patriotic women: Dorothy Vaughan, Mary Jackson, Katherine Johnson, Christine Darden, and Gloria Champine. Moving from World War II through NASA's golden age, touching on the civil rights era, the Space Race, the Cold War, and the women's rights movement, *Hidden Figures* interweaves a rich history of scientific achievement and technological innovation with the intimate stories of five women whose work forever changed the world—and whose lives show how out of one of America's most painful histories came one of its proudest moments.

Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s): (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)

This text will expose the students to historical events of gender inequality, racial discrimination, the importance of math and science, collaboration, working toward a cause that all took place during the Great Space Race in the 20th century. The text would serve as a springboard to discuss these issues as well as inspire our students to strongly consider math and science careers (and hope to inspire female students). This text would offer opportunities for cross-curricular instruction.

Include two professional reviews of this title: (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be “cut and pasted” (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

Review #1

Publishers Weekly

★ 08/29/2016

Shetterly, founder of the Human Computer Project, passionately brings to light the important and little-known story of the black women mathematicians hired to work as computers at the Langley Memorial Aeronautical Laboratory in Hampton, Va., part of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NASA's precursor). The first women NACA brought on took advantage of a WWII opportunity to work in a segregated section of Langley, doing the calculations necessary to support the projects of white male engineers. Shetterly writes of these women as core contributors to American success in the midst of a cultural "collision between race, gender, science, and war," teasing out how the personal and professional are intimately related. She celebrates the skills of mathematicians such as Dorothy Vaughan, Katherine Johnson, Mary Jackson, and Dorothy Hoover, whose brilliant work eventually earned them slow advancement but never equal footing. Shetterly collects much of her material directly from those who were there, using personal anecdotes to illuminate the larger forces at play. Exploring the intimate relationships among blackness, womanhood, and 20th-century American technological development, Shetterly crafts a narrative that is crucial to understanding subsequent movements for civil rights. A star-studded feature film based on Shetterly's book is due out in late 2016. (Sept.)

Review #2

Library Journal

★ 09/01/2016

In this debut, Shetterly shines a much-needed light on the bright, talented, and wholly underappreciated geniuses of the institution that would become NASA. Called upon during the labor shortage of World War II, these women were asked to serve their country and put their previously overlooked skills to work—all while being segregated from their white coworkers. The author tells the compelling stories of Dorothy Vaughan, Mary Jackson, Katherine Johnson, and Christine Darden as they navigated mathematical equations, the space race, and the civil rights movement over three decades of brilliant computing and discoveries. The professional and private lives of the ladies of Langley Research Center are documented through an impassioned and clearly well-researched narrative. Readers will learn how integral these women were to American aeronautics and be saddened by the racism and sexism that kept them from deserved recognition. VERDICT Shetterly's highly recommended work offers up a crucial history that had previously and unforgivably been lost. We'd do well to put this book into the hands of young women who have long since been told that there's no room for them at the scientific table. [See Prepub Alert, 3/21/16; "Editors' Fall Picks," p. 27.]—Kate DiGirolomo, Library Journal

What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?

Title: **Hidden Figures Young Reader's Edition**

Author: **Margot Lee Shetterly**

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Document any potentially controversial content:

Included in the text is violence and mild language authentic to what was happening during this time in our history

Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)

Gifted/Accelerated Regular At Risk

GRADE LEVEL(S): 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Reading level of this title (if applicable):

Date Submitted to Department Chair:

Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults