

Hidden Figures

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This is the inspiring story of the struggles of four Black women (“hidden figures”) and what they overcame to succeed. The math work they did would change not only their own lives, but the face of air and space travel forever.

Possible Strategies for Instruction

Comprehension

Ask questions throughout the reading process

Readers who ask questions before, during, and after reading are actively engaged and tend to remember important details and information. Here are some possible questions for this story:

Before

- Why is the book titled *Hidden Figures*?
- What do these four women have in common?
- The front cover shows math equations on their clothing. What does that have to do with who they are?

During

- What makes Dorothy want to serve her country?
- Why do people think it’s impossible for Dorothy to work as a computer?
- Do the women find it harder being Black or being female?
- When did segregation laws change? How did they change?
- Did these women win any awards for their work?

After

- What can we learn from these four women to help us today?
- How are racism and sexism still present today?

Recognize literary elements (genre, plot, character, setting, theme, problem/resolution)

This nonfiction story took place in the 1940s. Understanding the setting, plot, characters, problem/resolution, and theme will help readers gain a full understanding of the story. For example, pages 2 and 3 talk about computers, but in that time computers were people. What does the text tell us about the setting? characters? problem? How does the setting affect these elements?

Use text features to learn important information (titles, headings, captions, graphic features)

The title is a **text feature** that gives a quick idea of what the reader will learn. There are many ways to interpret the meaning in the title, *Hidden Figures*. Why do you think *Hidden Figures* is or isn’t a good title for this book? What are other possible titles for this book?

Accuracy

Chunk letters and sounds together

When reading unfamiliar or longer words, it can help to look for word patterns and small words you know within the word. There are many words with word patterns in this text, along with compound words that can be used to help readers look for words within words when reading:

- *airplane* (p. 3), *bathroom* (p. 8), *spaceship* (p. 21), *splashdown* (p. 21), *takeoff* (p. 21),

Fluency

Use punctuation to enhance phrasing and prosody

Use the quoted text to practice phrasing and prosody. For example, page 20 has an excerpt of a speech from President John F. Kennedy. Read and reread this using punctuation and intonation. Do this with other quoted content in the text as well.

Expand Vocabulary

Tune in to interesting words

This book contains many words to explore at a deeper level. Possible words are

- *segregated, impossible, turbulence, orbit, trajectory, and perseverance.*