

Film guide

Hidden Figures

USA | 2016 | Cert. PG | 127 mins
Director: Theodore Melfi

Set in the early 1960s as NASA vied with the USSR for supremacy in the Space Race, this is the true story of three African-American female mathematicians who contributed to the success of the first American to orbit Earth. The trio must battle against racial and gender barriers at a time when the Civil Rights Movement was at its peak in this inspirational, uplifting story which shines a light on a number of American's hidden heroes.



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Talk about it

What do you know about the Space Race between the USSR and the US? Why was it an important milestone? What else was going on between the two countries at the time?

Have you heard of the Civil Rights Movement? What did it involve? What do you understand by the term 'segregation'?

Discussion points

- Did anything about NASA surprise you? How did the three protagonists contribute to NASA's successes in the Space Race? List the different ways in which they overcame obstacles in order to do so.
- To what extent were Katherine, Dorothy and Mary obstructed in their working lives due to their gender? To what extent was this also due to their race? How difficult is it to separate the two? What types of discrimination can you remember?
- How did the film present mathematics and science? Did you find this engaging? How does *Hidden Figures* suggest that technology can impact on working lives?
- Why do you think this story has remained untold on film for over 50 years? What lessons can we take from the film?

Write about it

Bring your ideas together in a review and share it on our Into Film clubs' website. You could include a summary of the story, mention other films that it's similar to, describe what you particularly liked or disliked and give it your star rating.

Extension Activities

Conduct research into either the history of the Space Race or the Civil Rights Movement and plot a timeline of significant events throughout the years. Can you find any other 'hidden figures' that deserve to have their story told? What were their achievements?