

Shooting Scripts and Active Viewing

BASED ON THE UNTOLD TRUE STORY

HIDDEN FIGURES



MEET THE WOMEN YOU DON'T KNOW,
BEHIND THE MISSION YOU DO

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About *Journeys in Film*

Founded in 2003, *Journeys in Film* operates on the belief that teaching with film has the power to prepare students to live and work more successfully in the 21st century as informed and globally competent citizens. Its core mission is to advance global understanding among youth through the combination of age-appropriate films from around the world, interdisciplinary classroom materials coordinated with the films, and teachers' professional-development offerings. This comprehensive curriculum model promotes widespread use of film as a window to the world to help students to mitigate existing attitudes of cultural bias, cultivate empathy, develop a richer understanding of global issues, and prepare for effective participation in an increasingly interdependent world. Our standards-based lesson plans support various learning styles, promote literacy, transport students around the globe, and foster learning that meets core academic objectives.

Selected films act as springboards for lesson plans in subjects ranging from math, science, language arts, and social studies to other topics that have become critical for students, including environmental sustainability, poverty and hunger, global health, diversity, and immigration. Prominent educators on our team consult with filmmakers and cultural specialists in the development of curriculum guides, each one dedicated to an in-depth exploration of the culture and issues depicted in a specific film. The guides merge effectively into teachers' existing lesson plans and mandated curricular requirements, providing teachers with an innovative way to fulfill their school districts' standards-based goals.

Why use this program?

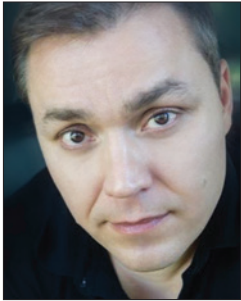
To be prepared to participate in tomorrow's global arena, students need to gain an understanding of the world beyond their own borders. *Journeys in Film* offers innovative and engaging tools to explore other cultures and social issues, beyond the often negative images seen in print, television, and film media.

For today's media-centric youth, film is an appropriate and effective teaching tool. *Journeys in Film* has carefully selected quality films that tell the stories of young people living in locations that may otherwise never be experienced by your students. Students travel through these characters and their stories: They drink tea with an Iranian family in *Children of Heaven*, play soccer in a Tibetan monastery in *The Cup*, find themselves in the conflict between urban grandson and rural grandmother in South Korea in *The Way Home*, watch the ways modernity challenges Maori traditions in New Zealand in *Whale Rider*, tour an African school with a Nobel Prize-winning teenager in *He Named Me Malala*, or experience the transformative power of music in *The Music of Strangers: Yo-Yo Ma & the Silk Road Ensemble*.

In addition to our ongoing development of teaching guides for culturally sensitive foreign films, *Journeys in Film* brings outstanding documentary films to the classroom. *Journeys in Film* has identified exceptional narrative and documentary films that teach about a broad range of social issues in real-life settings such as famine-stricken and war-torn Somalia, a maximum-security prison in Alabama, and a World War II concentration camp near Prague. *Journeys in Film* guides help teachers integrate these films into their classrooms, examining complex issues, encouraging students to be active rather than passive viewers, and maximizing the power of film to enhance critical thinking skills and to meet the Common Core Standards.

Journeys in Film is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

A Letter From Theodore Melfi



When you find a career you love, fame is far from your mind. Passion, excitement, and challenging work are instead the driving factors that motivate on a daily basis. Such is the case for Katherine G. Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan, and Mary Jackson—the

brilliant trio of African-American women working at NASA in the early 1960s—who helped serve as the brains behind one of the greatest operations in history: the Mercury space missions, culminating in the launch of astronaut John Glenn into orbit.

For decades, until the publication of Margot Lee Shetterly's book *Hidden Figures*, the story of Johnson, Vaughan, and Jackson, NASA's so-called "human computers," went untold. But when their story crossed my path—a story that blurs gender, race, and professional lines—I knew this was a part of history that had to be told. Fifty-five years later, *Hidden Figures* is a rich and moving true story that deserves a spot in our collective consciousness.

The backdrop for the movie is one of the most defining, complex periods in American history: the high-stakes Cold War, the space race, the Jim Crow South and the birth of the civil rights movement. Exploring these historic events serves as a reminder that we must learn from our past experiences while continuing to catapult ourselves forward.

It was also important for me, as a son raised by a single mother and as the father of two daughters, to explore the importance of STEM as a compelling and viable career choice for young girls. The media, cinema, and other public discourse often do society a disservice by not presenting strong, independent women in the fields of science, technology, engineering and

math on a regular basis. Drawing attention to these figures, often hidden in plain sight, will hopefully help to chart a new course for female students and change the composition of these vital industries.

At its core, *Hidden Figures* is the story of three remarkable women who overcame every obstacle stacked against them, despite gender, race, and the political landscape of the time. Illuminating this universal experience for the next generation was critical. My goal was to showcase how skill and knowledge are equalizers, how hard work and determination are the cornerstones to every pursuit, and how uniting under a common goal is more powerful than staying divided.

Johnson, Vaughan, and Jackson were pioneers who broke down commonly held perceptions and achieved something phenomenal. Their legacy of persistence serves to empower people of all circumstances and teaches us, as NASA points out in its webpage on Katherine Johnson,

- To love learning.
- To follow your passion.
- To accept the help you're given, and help others when you can.
- To follow new leads and don't give up. Keep trying.
- To go beyond the task at hand; ask questions; be inquisitive. Let yourself be heard.
- To do what you love, and love what you do.

I hope that through the exploration of *Hidden Figures*—and your own passions—you, too, will achieve the seemingly impossible.

Theodore Melfi

Director, *Hidden Figures*

Introducing *Hidden Figures*

Space exploration in the modern age is entering a new phase, replete with private space companies, prospective lunar tourism, and even projected travel to Mars, the closest planet in our solar system. It is fitting, therefore, to pause to look back at the early years of the United States space program, and particularly the early efforts to launch astronauts into orbit, a preliminary step toward a moon landing.

Hidden Figures tells us about a generally unheralded group of women whose brilliance and dedication provided a foundation for the space program—the Black women known as “human computers” who worked at the NASA Center in Langley, Virginia. Faced with obstacles to their own education and to job prospects because of race and gender, these women succeeded in earning places and eventually respect in a workplace dominated by male supervisors and colleagues, many of whom were reluctant to hire women, and marked by segregated facilities, from office to restroom, that reflected the pre-civil rights era.

Katherine Johnson, physicist and mathematician, calculated the orbits, trajectories, and launch windows that would put John Glenn and others into space and bring them back safely. Dorothy Vaughan, another mathematician, became the first African-American supervisor at NASA, learning the computer language FORTRAN on her own and teaching it to her staff. Mary Jackson, an aerospace engineer as well as a mathematician, had to go to court to earn the right to take graduate-level courses at a previously all-white school; she eventually also served as a program officer helping other women succeed at NASA.

Their story is also the story of the world in which they lived and worked—the racism and segregation that made their lives more difficult; the beginnings of the civil rights movement in the South; the Cold War with Russia that gave such impetus to the drive for superiority in space; and the space race itself. The film weaves these events into the dramatic personal stories with skill and accuracy, making it an ideal film for the classroom. It is sure to serve as inspiration to many young women considering a career in science and mathematics.

Hidden Figures has been nominated for many awards, including the Academy Awards, BAFTA, the Golden Globes, the NAACP Image Awards, the Screen Actors Guild, and the African-American Film Critics Association.

Film credits

DIRECTOR: Theodore Melfi

SCREENPLAY: Allison Schroeder and Theodore Melfi, based on the book with the same title by Margot Lee Shetterly

PRODUCERS: Donna Gigliotti, Peter Chernin, Jenno Topping, Pharrell Williams, Theodore Melfi

ACTORS: Taraji P. Henson, Octavia Spencer, Janelle Monáe, Kirsten Dunst, Jim Parsons, Mahershala Ali, Aldis Hodge, Glen Powell, Kimberly Quinn, Kevin Costner, Olek Krupa

Shooting Scripts and Active Viewing

Enduring Understandings

- A docudrama (such as *Hidden Figures*) is based on true events but the filmmakers are free to add fictitious persons and/or events to tell the story in an entertaining way, in other words, to fictionalize the story as it is told.
- The characters and events that are fictitious should be created faithfully to simplify and/or dramatize the story, not to exaggerate or distort this record of history.
- A docudrama tells its story just as fiction films do, using whichever of the many filming techniques and editing devices the filmmaker thinks appropriate.

Essential Questions

- What does active viewing (vs. passive) viewing demand of the viewer? What are its rewards for the viewer?
- What film techniques were used in making *Hidden Figures* and how do they serve the filmmaker's intention?
- Does the filmmaker seem to have a point of view regarding the experiences of the Black women who worked as "human computers" at NASA?
- How can we know if the filmmaker takes exceptional liberties in creating fictional scenes and characters?

Notes to the Teacher

Hidden Figures is a docudrama which, unlike a documentary film, leaves the filmmaker free to invent characters who never existed and events that never occurred, presenting them as part of the story being told. Few of the named NASA personnel, other than the African-American "human computers" and the seven Mercury astronauts, represent actual persons; most are fictitious characters representing one or more real persons. For example, no such person as Paul Stafford (the only engineer in the Space Task Group with whom Katherine interacts directly in the film) worked at NASA. However, the interactions between Katherine and Stafford depicted in the film actually happened, albeit with several real engineers for whom Stafford stands in.

What keeps a docudrama from being totally a work of fiction, however, is its mission to tell a basically true story of the reality that one or more persons (in this case three women) actually lived. Dorothy Vaughan, Katherine Johnson, and Mary Jackson actually worked at NASA as West ("colored") "human computers" during the early 1960s and advanced to higher positions due to their exceptional mathematical skills. Much of what is depicted in this film is true to their life experiences, even though time is compressed and simplified for the sake of the story line.

Asking students, and, indeed, all viewers, to be aware of the limits and ethical obligations in the creation of a docudrama is a good way to make them view the film more actively. While the passive film viewer may make such superficial judgments as "I really liked it" or "This film stinks!" the active viewer can say such things as "I find the women's success too rapid to be believable, but I'm sure the racism of that time was as blatant, overt, and cruel as depicted," or "I never believed some of

the specific events in this film, but I was totally absorbed by the stories of the characters depicted,” or whatever specific distinctions are appropriate to express their informed opinion based on critical thinking and analysis. Becoming an active viewer of film is worth far more than just being an alert film viewer; students who learn to think critically about their film-viewing experiences are better prepared to apply critical thinking and analysis to other genres, perhaps even to their own lives.

Begin by showing the first eight minutes of the film with whatever introduction you deem appropriate, and mention that you will be stopping the film partway through to discuss some assignments. As specified in the Procedure, you will stop the film and hand out the materials on the film script and the glossary. Starting the film at the beginning, you will then stop the player on every new shot, asking students to read about the shot from the film script provided in **Handout 1**. Two minutes of film may easily take 20 minutes of class time this way, but your students will soon realize that it took far, far longer for the crew to set up the camera, get the lighting, scenery, and props ready, and then have the actors perform appropriately in order to produce this film one shot at a time.

Next, you will engage your students in a discussion of passive viewing versus active viewing: Passive viewing is watching a film or television program solely for the purpose of being entertained, without paying particular attention other than its level of entertainment. On the other hand, while watching a film or television program for entertainment, an active viewer is aware that the film or program is the product of many decisions about recording and editing this material. The active viewer more fully understands and appreciates these decisions and even realizes that, in the filmmaker’s position,

the viewer might have made different decisions. This doesn’t reduce the enjoyment; it may enhance enjoyment by noticing nuances that escape the passive viewer.

The lesson concludes with a list of suggested essay assignments to be completed after viewing the entire film, as much as possible without interruption. You may wish to have your students give an oral report instead of writing an essay. Remember that while it won’t matter if two or more students choose the same writing assignment and say almost the same things in their essays, for an oral report this would be detrimental for any student following another with a similar report. You may wish to consider group reports or panel presentations as a way of avoiding this problem.

Before the lesson, make photocopies of **HANDOUTS 1 and 2** and of “A Glossary of Film Terms” from www.journeysinfilm.org. If possible, use different colors of paper for each set of handouts.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS ADDRESSED BY THIS LESSON**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1**

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2

Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Duration of the Lesson

One class period for the introduction (Procedure steps 1–6)

Time for viewing film (127 minutes in length)

One class period for a quiz and for discussion.

Assessment

Quiz on film terms from **HANDOUT 2**

Short essay assignments from **HANDOUT 3**

Participation in class discussion

Short essay

Materials

DVD player or streaming capability

DVD copy of *Hidden Figures*

HANDOUTS 1 and 2 for each student

Copy of or access to “A Glossary of Film Terms” from www.journeysinfilm.org for each student

Procedure

Part 1: How a Shooting Script Works

1. Tell the class that they will be viewing the opening of *Hidden Figures*, with whatever introduction you think appropriate for its subject matter. Explain that you will be stopping the film to allow for some analysis before they view the entire film. Show the opening two sequences, stopping at the end of the shot that begins when the three women arrive at Langley, escorted by the Virginia police officer, and ends with a rocket being launched skyward (approx. seven minutes into the film).
2. Distribute copies of **HANDOUT 1: FACSIMILE SHOOTING SCRIPT** and **A GLOSSARY OF FILM TERMS**. Ask a student to read aloud the “front credits” and “title cards” information from **HANDOUT 1** and then read the definitions of “front credits” and “title cards” from the glossary. Ask a second student to read aloud from **HANDOUT 1** all of the information about shot #1 (Location, Scene Number, Time, Description/Action, Dialogue/Sound) as well as the definition of any words that are bold, italic, and underlined in the script. (For shot one there are three such terms: *Establishing shot*, *boom shot*, and *sequence*. Note that film terms will be bold, italic, and underlined the first time they appear in the script but not in successive uses.) Discuss these terms with the class to be sure they understand them clearly.
3. Restart the film, stopping on the second shot. (Shot #1 is only a few seconds so this requires you to respond rapidly to the shot change. You may want to practice stopping on each shot since you will need to do that for the 41 shots in the facsimile script.) Have a different student read the information for shot #2 and then locate and read the bold/italic/underlined term “eye-level” [found in the entry for “camera angle”] with its definition from the glossary.
4. Repeat the above procedure calling on different students for each successive shot until you have reached the end of the first sequence and discussed each new film term. Read aloud, or call on a student to read aloud, the information following the script before going on with the next part of the lesson.
5. Now ask your students to pay attention to the shooting and editing of the second sequence as they re-view it. Stop the film at the end of the shot when the women arrive at Langley, which transitions into a shot of a rocket launch. (This later turns out to be a Russian rocket, clearly not seen in the sky over Langley). Ask students what they noticed during this second viewing that they had missed in the first viewing.
6. Ask the class to define “passive viewing” and “active viewing” and supplement their ideas with information from Notes to the Teacher.
7. Distribute **HANDOUT 2: GETTING STARTED WITH ACTIVE VIEWING**. If time permits, allow time for reading. Ask your students to select an assignment for taking notes as the film is playing for the next class periods.

8. For homework, have students read through the rest of the **GLOSSARY OF FILM TERMS** in preparation for viewing the film without interruption. If you plan to give a quiz on this in the future, announce it now.

Part 2: Film Screening and Essays

1. Show the film after reminding your students to take notes on the assignment they have chosen as the film is playing. After the film is finished, set a due date and your preferred length and format for the essays. You may wish to allow a day for writing and writing conferences following the showing of the film, with students using their notes and the handouts to complete their essays before having a general discussion.
2. A Possible Future Writing Assignment: The opening sequence, with its broken scenes intercut, could have been told in a straightforward, unbroken manner. Using the facsimile shooting script from **HANDOUT 1**, reconstruct in your mind this sequence into five scenes: (1) the road, (2) the hallway, (3) the principal's office, (4) the road (days later), (5) the classroom in the new school. Assignment: Describe the gains and losses for this film if the filmmaker had chosen this simpler, chronologically ordered presentation. (You may wish to collect the copies of the script after the original lesson is over in order to be able to pass them out for use when giving this writing assignment.)

Handout 1 ► P. 1

Facsimile Shooting Script

The following is an imagined “shooting script” created from viewing (as opposed to being created for actual use in filming) that illustrates the kind of planning done for filmmaking). Be certain you can use the two similar terms *scene* and *sequence* correctly. If necessary, check the glossary for their definitions.

Shooting Script for Hidden Figures			
A. <u>Front credits</u> *: (Production company logos): “20th Century Fox” and “CE”			
*Terms from the glossary are bold , <i>italic</i> , and <u>underlined</u> for their first use, but not in subsequent uses. Students should refer to the glossary for definitions of each new term before proceeding.			
B. <u>Title card</u> “Based on true events”			
C. Sequence 1: Young Katherine Coleman has a great mind. (Note: She took her husband’s name, Johnson, when she married.)			
Scene # and Location	Shot # and [length]	Description and Action	Sound and Dialogue
1: Gravel road through pine woods	1. [00:47–00:53]	<u>Establishing shot</u> : a <u>boom shot</u> looking down on little girl’s (young Katherine’s) head as she walks, kicking a pine cone	Music, predominantly piano, plays gently throughout the first <u>sequence</u> (shots 1–39), growing stronger at the end. Sound of blowing leaves. Katherine : “14-15-16, prime, 18, prime...”
1: Same	2 [00:54–00:58]	<u>Eye-level</u> through the pine woods, Katherine is seen walking: (title “White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia 1926”)	Katherine : “...20, 21...”



Handout 1 ► P. 2

Facsimile Shooting Script

1: Same	3 [00:58–01:01]	<u>Low-angle</u> of Katherine walking toward camera, as before	Katherine "...22..." Sound cut: Principal: "West Virginia Collegiate..."
2: Principal's office	4 [01:01–01:05]	<u>Cut:</u> to <u>Seated eye-level</u> shot through open door frame (left) with hanging hat/raincoat framing the shot (right); 3 seated people (Katherine's parents, back to camera, principal at desk/facing camera); 4th person (teacher) enters left (*all "right/left" directions given from <u>viewers'</u> point of view, which is the opposite of the characters' point of view)	Principal: "...is the best school for Negroes in the state." Teacher: "It's the only school..."
2: Same	5 [01:05–01:07]	Seated eye-level of Katherine's parents, father facing camera on left, mother profile on right	Teacher: "...past the 8th grade anywhere around her."
3: Hallway outside principal's office	6 [01:08–01:11]	<u>Abrupt-cut:</u> to <u>close up</u> (CU) of stained glass window w/geometric patterns; Katherine is on other side, seen through clear panel/left.	Katherine: "...isosceles, scalene..."
3: Same	7: [01:09–01:13]	CU of Katherine in profile/right, looking up as if at window (Note: her glasses are oversized, looks over rim).	Katherine: "...equilateral..."
3: Same	8: [01:13–1:17]	CU of window. Panels magically emerge in response to Katherine's identification (Katherine's imagination?)	Katherine: "...rhombus, trapezoid..."
4. Back to principal's office	9: [01:17–1:19]	Seated eye-level of Katherine's parents, same as in 5	Father: "Katherine is in the 6th grade." Sound edit: Teacher: "They want to..."



Handout 1 ► P.3

Facsimile Shooting Script

4: Same	10: [01:19–01:20]	Teacher, standing, seen from mother's <u><i>point of view</i></u> (p.o.v.)	Teacher: "...take her early."
5: Back to hallway	11: [01:20–01:22]	<u><i>Ground-level</i></u> close-up of Katherine's feet	Katherine: "...tetrahedron..."
5: Same	12: [01:22–01:24]	<u><i>Long-shot</i></u> from seated eye-level of Katherine (profile) on bench looking at window/left	Katherine: "...dodecahedron."
5: Same	13: [01:24–01:26]	CU of Katherine's notepad covered w/ geometric drawings, hand completing one on right.	Sound cut: Principal: "They're offering a full scholarship."
6: Back to principal's office	14: [01:27–01:28]	Group of four in same arrangement as shot 4; camera now inside office, closer to group.	Principal: "All you have to do is get there."
6: Same	15: [01:29–01:30]	Seated eye-level of Katherine's parents, same as in shots 5 and 9; mother turns to look at father.	None
7: Classroom	16: [01:30–01:32]	Seated eye-level of five students, youngest is Katherine. All facing right, teacher's (male) back at right.	Professor: "...Miz Coleman..."
7: Same	17: [01:32–01:37]	<u><i>Low angle</i></u> (Katherine's p.o.v.), looking up at teacher; teacher extends hand w/chalk	Professor: "...Why don't you solve the equation on the board?"
7: Same	18: [01:38–01:40]	Eye-level (w/ Katherine; professor's hand seen, upper right, holding chalk, Katherine eyes it warily, reaches for chalk)	None
7: Same	19: [01:40–01:42]	CU of Katherine's hand/lower left and teacher's/upper right as she accepts chalk	None (Remember this shot; look for something similar later in film.)



Handout 1 ► P. 4

Facsimile Shooting Script

7: Same	20: [01:42–01:43]	CU of Katherine as she attacks the problem; shot as if chalkboard glass and camera behind “p.o.v. of chalkboard”; students behind Katherine on both her left and right; teacher standing at right.	None
7: Same	21: [01:43–01:44]	Student’s p.o.v. of Katherine at the board, working on problem.	Sound cut: Teacher: “...we took up a collection among teachers and such.” Sound of chalk writing on board.
8: Back to principal’s office	22: [01:45–01:46]	Group of four in same arrangement as shot 14. Teacher hands contribution to mother.	Teacher: “...it’s not a lot, but it’s enough...”
8: Same	23: [01:47–01:51]	Seated eye-level of Katherine’s parents, same as in shots 5, 9, and 15. Teacher’s hand seen handing money to mother.	Teacher: “...to help you get settled in...” Mother: “That’s more than kind, Miz Sumner.”
9: Back to classroom	24: [01:51–01:53]	CU of (Katherine’s hand writing on board	Sound of chalk on board
9: Same	25: [01:53–01:54]	Same as Shot 20 but Katherine is smiling as she completes problem	Same
9: Same	26: [01:54–01:57]	Standing eye-level looking down on five students, seated, looking left, watching Katherine	Same
9: Same	27: [01:57–01:58]	Similar to 21; students watching Katherine are closer together and seem closer to her	Same
9: Same	28: [01:58–2:01]	2 students leaning/looking right, watching Katherine.	Same



Handout 1 ► P. 5

Facsimile Shooting Script

9: Same	29: [02:01–02:02]	CU of Katherine's hand as she circles answer	Same
9: Same	30: [02:02–02:05]	Similar to 20 and 25; <i>extreme CU</i> of Katherine (mid-forehead to chin); chalkboard writing reflected in her glasses.	Sound cut: Katherine "...if the product of two terms is zero..."
9: Same	31: [02:05–02:23]	Same as 21; Katherine faces class, explaining her work. Camera <i>dollies in</i> [find "dollies" in glossary under "camera movement"] on Katherine as she speaks until only she and board are seen.	Katherine : "...then common sense says that atit's pretty straight-forward from there."
9: Same	32: [02:23–02:25]	Low angle, looking up at professor as if from Katherine's p.o.v., who looks stunned	Music gradually begins to grow stronger
9: Same	33: [02:26–02:29]	CU of Katherine looking over her glasses, then pushes them up.	<i><u>Voice-over (V.O.)</u></i> Teacher : "...in all my years of teaching..."
9: Same	34: [02:29–02:32]	Same as 31; Katherine walks out of <i>frame</i> /left	V.O.: Teacher : "...I've never seen a mind like the one your daughter has."
10: Again (but not the same day) road through woods	35: [02:33–02:34]	Same as 3; Katherine runs toward camera that <i>booms</i> upward, as if allowing her to pass under.	Mother : "...Katherine!" Father : "...hurry on now, love." Music begins to swell.
10: Same	36: [02:34–02:40]	<i>Reverse angle</i> ; camera booms down. Katherine runs toward car.	V.O.: Teacher : "You have to go." Mother : "Let Mommy tuck you in."
10: Same	37: [02:40–02:45]	Camera looking through wire fence at a field, highway cuts through; car travels right to left; camera booms upward to almost clear wire.	Vocalizations added to music



Handout 1 ▶ P. 6

Facsimile Shooting Script

10: Same	38: [02:45–02:47]	Camera shot through windshield, in front of mother in passenger seat; boy seen in back, Katherine to the right, father at wheel.	Same
10: Same	39: [02:47–02:51]	Low angle of Katherine framed by car window, looking out; mother on left	V.O.: Teacher: “ You have to see what she becomes.”
Transition sequence 1 to sequence 2	40: [02:51–03:09]	Camera booms down while panning right (field w/few cows, trees at rear.) <i>Suggests a continuation of previous sequence/scene.</i> *	Same
<p>*Gradually, the sepia tones become full color, making transition from past (sepia) to present (color/1961). This is an establishing shot for the next sequence/scene.</p> <p>The words “Fox 2000 Pictures Presents” (<i>opening credits</i>) followed by “Hidden Figures” (<i>title</i>) followed by “Hampton, Virginia 1961” (title card) appear over the shot as the camera continues moving right, coming to rest on a turquoise-and-white automobile stopped on the road, hood open, indicating mechanical trouble.</p>			
D. Sequence 2: Getting to work			
11: Highway in VA	41: [03:09–03:13]	Eye-level shot of adult female African American, Katherine, framed in car window; looks out/over the camera. She is in front passenger seat; over-sized glasses that slip down her nose.	Music reaching concluding chords; it finishes before the upcoming dialogue begins.

Sequence 2: Getting to work, composed of just one **scene**, on a roadside in Virginia. It is approximately four minutes in length and contains 89 shots. The first **sequence** was approximately two minutes in length and contained 39 shots (in four locations), divided into 10 **scenes**.

Handout 2 ▶ P. 1

Getting Started With Active Viewing

Directions:

Most of us are passive viewers of film until some experience hooks us into becoming active viewers. The assignments below are designed to start each of you on that path. Developing the habit of viewing actively will take time. It will ultimately become rewarding as you will begin to get more out of your viewing experiences.

Choose one of the following suggestions for a more active viewing experience. Take notes during the film on whatever you notice relating to this choice. After the film viewing is over, complete the assignment.

- 1.** Visual images and their composition are created to have an effect, usually one we are not conscious of as viewers. Horizontal lines and symmetrical composition suggest peace and calm; vertical lines suggest strength and power; diagonals, broken lines, and tilted frames suggest anger, chaos, and turmoil.

Assignment: As you watch this film, be aware of the typical composition of the images. Although racism is a strong part of this story, do you see angry conflict or gradual progress? Does the composition of the images support the story's message? Write a brief essay discussing the film's compositional imagery and its story.
- 2.** Films about recent historical events, for which actual film footage exists, often take advantage of this availability by intercutting the historical coverage into the film. Sometimes, one or more of the film's characters are edited into the old film by a special effect.

Assignment: Make note of any time this film presents documentary footage. Usually, graininess of old film is greater than any graininess in new film. Write a short essay describing the events shown in documentary footage. Is there any problem with the use of this footage? Can you accept such footage as part of the ongoing film?

Handout 2 ▶ P.2

Getting Started With Active Viewing

3. The setting of this film (early 1960s) and place (Virginia) were filled with blatant racism. This film depicts not only how racism affected those involved but also the progress longed for and, in some cases, realized.

Assignment: Make note of specific examples of both the day-to-day racism of the time and moments of success in overcoming this thinking. Write a brief essay considering how the film showed racism toward African Americans and those qualities of the women that were useful in overcoming at least some degree of this racism.

4. Make notes of the shots in which the subject is viewed through the camera located behind an obstruction, such as the wire fence in shot #27 of the Colemans' car departing for "West Virginia Collegiate."

Assignment: Write a short essay describing several of the shots that make use of some sort of visual obstruction. Why do you think the filmmaker chose to place the camera behind the obstruction? Is the effect the same in each case? What impact does it have on you as a viewer?

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5. This film is Katherine Coleman Goble's (later Katherine G. Johnson) story more than it is that of Dorothy Vaughan or Mary Jackson.

Assignment: Take notes on the lives of one of the other two women and write a short essay describing the life of Dorothy Vaughan or Mary Jackson as presented. Notice as many suggested details about her life as possible. Write a short essay discussing the life of the woman you have chosen. Why do you think the filmmaker chose to emphasize Katherine's story on film rather than hers?

6. In the first sequence the filmmaker introduces a ***motif*** of Katherine's eyeglasses not only being very large but also requiring frequent adjustment. Notice how frequently this is used throughout the film. Coffee is another motif that appears frequently.

Assignment: Take notes on when these two motifs appear and write a short essay about how each motif helps to advance the story, delineate the character, or support the theme.



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7. If you have read Margot Lee Shetterly's book *Hidden Figures* on which the film was based, you know it does not center on Katherine Coleman Goble (Johnson), as the film does, but presents the stories of Dorothy Vaughan and Mary Jackson somewhat equally while mentioning many other women as well. The book also begins earlier and ends later.

Assignment: Write a short essay considering the ways the book and the film differ in their coverage of the many black women who worked at NASA. Think about the fact that a film must tell a coherent story in approximately two hours, whereas a book can take as much time as the author wishes. Which genre allowed you to experience more fully the problems these women faced? Give examples of at least three events that you understood with greater clarity from one genre rather than the other.



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