



INTERNATIONAL DAY  
OF WOMEN AND GIRLS  
**IN SCIENCE**  
FEBRUARY 11

## History and Today: Inspiring Women

### MATHS: KATHERINE JOHNSON



**BORN:** West Virginian, USA, 1918

**DIED:** Virginia, USA, 2020

#### WHAT WAS KATHERINE INTERESTED IN?

Katherine loved maths and worked for the space agency, NASA.

#### WHY DOES KATHERINE INSPIRE US?

- Katherine was the first African-American woman to attend graduate school at West Virginia University in the USA, at a time when racial segregation still existed
- Katherine studied how to use geometry for space travel. She figured out the paths for spacecraft to go around Earth and land on the Moon
- Katherine worked in a time before computers and the internet existed, so she performed her complicated calculations using paper and a pen!
- Katherine has received countless awards for her brilliant work, including the Congressional Gold Medal and is represented in the National Women's Hall of Fame

#### WHAT DO YOU THINK?

- Do you enjoy maths at school?
- How do you think Katherine felt when her maths calculations were used to launch space rockets?

#### DO YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT KATHERINE?

<https://www.nasa.gov/audience/forstudents/k-4/stories/nasa-knows/who-was-katherine-johnson-k4>

Poster By Kelly Blacklock