



## *Pushing the Limits of Motion* Suggested Reading and Discussion Questions

Maybe it's the action of a powerful physical force or maybe it's the way we move to *counteract* that force. Some motion is more figurative, like the experiences we pass through on life's journey and the changes they inspire. Humans enriching their existence are humans in motion.

### ***Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race***

**Margot Lee Shetterly, Nonfiction.** A major motion picture. 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.

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. - *goodreads.com*

- In advocating for herself to work on the Mercury capsule launch, Katherine says to her bosses, "Tell me where you want the man to land, and I'll tell you where to send him up." How are the women in *Hidden Figures* able to express confidence in their work and abilities? In what ways is that confidence validated by their coworkers?
- In what ways does the race for space parallel the civil rights movement? How do they both connect to the idea of freedom?
- Some people thought that spending money on space exploration was wasteful when there were so many other problems in the United States. What do you think of that idea? Are there other benefits that have emerged from the science and technologies that advanced due to space exploration?

