



# Counting on Katherine: How Katherine Johnson Put Astronauts on the Moon

Books Reviewed:

[Counting On Katherine: How Katherine Johnson Put Astronauts on the Moon](#) [1]

Issue:

[238](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Sue McGonigle](#) [3]

New to Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

This is the story of Katherine Johnson who, behind the scenes and against the odds, had a crucial role in Project Mercury; the programme designed to put American astronauts into space. She calculated the flight paths which led to the successful moon landings and also, under tremendous pressure, calculated the flight path required for the safe return to earth of the damaged Apollo 13 spaceship. Katherine gradually gained the trust of astronauts and the respect of the white male dominated community at NASA.

The picturebook begins with Katherine's childhood, she was an exceptional learner with a gift for mathematics. It describes the obstacles she overcame as an African American due to discrimination and segregation. Luckily, Katherine had a very supportive family who moved towns so that she could attend a high school for black students. Through determination and hard work, she secured her dream job working as a mathematician or 'computer' at NASA.

This is an authorised biography and based on Interviews with Katherine and her family.

Additional factual information about Katherine's life is included at the back of the book and there are also links to find out more. It is an enjoyable read and the warmth of the full colour illustrations and the clear and accessible layout add to the appeal of this very attractive book.

This book is a great addition to stories telling the role of women, and in particular women of colour, in history. Katherine's story might inspire children, especially young girls to aim high. It also provides insight into how crucial accurate mathematical calculation is to space exploration. The end papers, featuring huge chalkboards covered in sums, problems and formulae are a nice feature indicating the fascination and mystery of mathematical calculations and inviting readers to turn the pages to find out more. **SM**

**Links:**

[1] <http://savfkn.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/counting-on-katherine-how-katherine-johnson-put-astronauts-on-the-moon>

[2] <http://savfkn.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/238>

[3] <http://savfkn.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/sue-mcgonigle>