QUIZ

A Computer Called Katherine - Questions & Activity

This Quiz introduces Katherine Johnson's story, showing how her math helped put America on the moon in a kid-friendly read-aloud.

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Read Aloud: A Computer Called Katherine by Suzanne Slade | Stories with Star
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https://youtu.be/fuwQDbxphfI?si=xWa4nI4nLX1buObx

1 What nickname did the workplace give to Catherine and other women who did calculations?

A Technicians
B Analysts
C Computers
D Programmers

Explanation

The women who did calculations were called "computers" because they made calculations that helped engineers design airplanes and flight plans.
Found in the video around [04:01-04:11].

2 Which geometric curve did Catherine fall in love with when plotting points on a graph?

A Circle

B Ellipse

C Hyperbola

D Parabola

Explanation

Catherine connected plotted points and they created a U-shaped curve called a parabola, which the transcript names directly.
Found in the video around [03:16-03:28].

3 Why did John Glenn insist Catherine check the computer's calculations before he flew?

A He knew she wrote the computer program

B He trusted her more than the machine

C He had to follow protocol

D He wanted to meet her in person

Explanation

John Glenn trusted Catherine more than the machine and asked her to check every number, so he would only fly after she verified the calculations.

4 What simple habit did Catherine do everywhere that showed her interest in numbers?

A Drew shapes

B Solved puzzles

C Counted things

D Wrote poems

Explanation

The transcript describes Catherine counting everywhere she went — steps, plates, and even stars — showing her early love of numbers.

5 **Which of these barriers did Catherine face but overcome to continue her education?**

A No nearby library

B Lack of interest in math

C No high school for black students

D No teachers who could teach geometry

Explanation

Her town did not have a high school for black students, so her family moved closer to a school she could attend, showing she overcame educational segregation.

6 **When asked whether women could attend the engineers' meetings, what did Catherine do after learning there was no law against it?**

A She filed a lawsuit

B She wrote a letter to the newspapers

C She attended the meeting anyway

D She waited until given permission

Explanation

Catherine showed up at the next meeting ready to work because there was no law preventing women from attending, so she insisted on participating.

7 What was Catherine asked to calculate for America's first space flight?

A The rocket's weight

B The launch time

C The astronaut's suit size

D The rocket's color

Explanation

The team asked Catherine to calculate when the first space flight should blast off by computing the rocket's flight path and working backward to the launch time.

8 Name two ways Catherine used geometry in her work at the space center.

Suggested Answer

1. She plotted points on a graph to create a parabola and used it to model flight paths.
2. She computed the rocket's flight path (shape and splashdown point) and worked backward to find the correct launch time.

9 Describe one example from the video that shows Catherine stood up to unfair rules.

Suggested Answer

Catherine learned women were not allowed at engineers' meetings. She asked if there was a law against it, and when there wasn't, she attended the meeting to do the work herself.

10 Activity:

- Go on a 15-minute shape hunt around the home and yard. Find flat shapes (squares, rectangles, triangles, circles) and 3D shapes (cubes, cylinders, spheres, cones).
- For each shape, count how many you find of that type and sketch one example.
  What to record:
- A list of shape names with the number found (for example: "Triangles: 6").
- A small drawing or label showing where each example was found (kitchen table - rectangle; ball - sphere).
- One short sentence about which shape you found the most and one about a shape that was hard to find.

Suggested Answer

Answers will vary.