

## **HANDOUT for reading:**

NASA commemorated the many contributions of retired mathematician Katherine Johnson to America's space program during a building dedication ceremony on May 5, at the agency's Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia. Langley's new Katherine G. Johnson Computational Research Facility was formally dedicated to the venerated mathematician and Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient. Johnson worked at Langley from 1953 until her retirement in 1986, beginning as a research mathematician -- part of a pool of women hired to perform mathematical equations and calculations by hand for engineers. She quickly distinguished herself and was permanently assigned to the branch that would later calculate the launch windows for NASA's first Project Mercury flights.

Following a naming dedication ceremony on May 5, 2016 - the 55th anniversary of Alan Shepard's historic rocket launch - NASA Langley Research Center's newest building is known as the Katherine G. Johnson Computational Research Facility, honoring the "human computer" who successfully calculated the trajectories for America's first space flights.

## **QUESTIONS for the discussion:**

*(Discussion in class with the contribution of both girls and boys)*

- What female scientist can you talk about?
- What male scientist can you talk about?
- How come that in the textbooks there aren't mentioned female scientists so often as men scientists?
- Have you heard about Katherine Johnson, the mathematician?
- What is she famous for? (If students don't know anything about her play the first link)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DiGVt8OZox8>