



Trailblazer



What is NASA?

- **NASA stands for National Aeronautics and Space Administration.**
- **It studies space and plans space missions in the USA.**

Illustration: Mary W. Jackson.

First Female Black Engineer Honoured

NASA are giving their headquarters in Washington DC a new name. Its name will be the Mary W. Jackson NASA Headquarters.

Mary W. Jackson was the first Black female **engineer** at NASA. She achieved a lot in her career. Mary worked for an earlier version of NASA, called NACA. She worked as a 'human computer'.

In this job, she would do calculations that a computer would do today.

This work was not valued much at the time. Back then, the job was even to women while men generally did better-paid roles.

In her life, Mary W. Jackson faced racial **discrimination**. She had to ask for special permission to study with White students when training to be an engineer.

Despite the prejudice at that time, Mary achieved a lot. In 1958, she became the first Black female engineer at NASA.

There, she worked as an aerospace

engineer for 20 years. She researched how air flowed around aircraft.

She later became the manager of the women's programme at NASA. In this job, she helped women to get engineering jobs.

On hearing the news, Mary W. Jackson's daughter said she felt "honoured" that her mother had been remembered.

Glossary

headquarters	The main base of an organisation.
engineer	A person who designs or builds, engines, machines or structures.
discrimination	Treating someone differently and unfairly.
prejudice	Having an opinion on something that's not based on evidence.

Questions

1. Which city will the Mary W. Jackson NASA Headquarters be in?

- London
- Miami
- New York
- Washington DC

2. 'She achieved a lot in her career.'

This suggests that ...

- The author is impressed by Mary W. Jackson's work.
- The author doesn't know who Mary W. Jackson is.
- The author is a big fan of space.
- The author has met Mary W. Jackson.

3. 'She **researched** how air flowed around aircraft.'

Tick the word which is closest in meaning to 'researched' in this sentence.

- amazed
- invented
- studied
- returned

4. Why do you think Mary W. Jackson's daughter felt honoured to have NASA headquarters named after her mother?

5. Find one way men and women were treated differently when Mary W. Jackson started working at NACA.

6. Summarise this news story in 20 words or fewer.

Answers

1. Which city will the Mary W. Jackson NASA Headquarters be in?

- London
- Miami
- New York
- Washington DC**

2. 'She achieved a lot in her career.'

This suggests that ...

- The author is impressed by Mary W. Jackson's work.**
- The author doesn't know who Mary W. Jackson is.
- The author is a big fan of space.
- The author has met Mary W. Jackson.

3. 'She **researched** how air flowed around aircraft.'

Tick the word which is closest in meaning to 'researched' in this sentence.

- amazed
- invented
- studied**
- returned

4. Why do you think Mary W. Jackson's daughter felt honoured to have NASA headquarters named after her mother?

Accept any reasonable answer which refers to the news story, e.g. I think she is honoured because she was proud of her mum.

5. Find one way men and women were treated differently when Mary W, Jackson started working at NACA.

Accept any reasonable answer from the news story, e.g. When Mary W. Jackson started worked, men did better paid jobs than women.

6. Summarise this news story in 20 words or fewer.

Accept any reasonable summary which is 20 words or fewer, e.g. Mary W. Jackson was NASA's first Black female engineer. NASA are naming their headquarters in Washington DC after her.