

*The Vast Wonder of the World: Biologist Ernest Everett Just*  
**Discussion Guide**  
Grades 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>

**Before Reading: to activate schema, build background knowledge, and set a purpose.**

- Flip through the illustrations with your students. Have students make predictions about the book. What do you think Ernest Everett Just studied? What makes you think that?
- Use RIF's [K-W-L chart](#) individually or as a class to activate students' thinking as they begin reading a new book.
- Frontload vocabulary: *scientist, authority, ability, observe, segregation, reputation*

**During Reading: to engage students, check for understanding, and make connections.**

- How was Ernest different than other scientists?
- What challenges did Ernest experience throughout his childhood? How do you think this will impact him as he grows older?
- In what ways is Ernest a strong leader? Be specific in your examples.
- How does Ernest overcome the obstacles of segregation?

**After Reading: to summarize, question, and reflect.**

- Share this quote with your students from Ernest Everett Just: "Life is not only a struggle against the surroundings from which life came; it is also a co-operation with them." Ask: In what ways did Ernest follow his own advice? As a group, share ideas in which people can use this quote as motivation to preserve through challenges.
- Consider using RIF's Historic Figures Activity Guides to allow for students to make connections and expand on what they have learned.

If your students enjoyed this book...

- Encourage them to continue to discuss it and refer to it in other lessons and conversations.
- Let them explore more about the topic by reading other books with similar themes, structure, characters, or content.
- Visit RIF's [Sustainable Futures](#) center to learn more!