



UNDERSTANDING SOURCES THROUGH ROBERT H. JACKSON

Lesson Plan for Grades 4-8

Lesson Plan: Understanding Sources Through Robert H. Jackson

Grade Levels: 4-8

Duration: 45-60 minutes

Overview: Students will learn how to differentiate between primary and secondary sources using the life and career of Robert H. Jackson as a focal point. Through engaging activities, they will practice identifying fact vs. opinion, recognize bias, and reflect on how to determine if a source is reliable.

Learning Goals

- Analyze and interpret evidence from primary and secondary sources.
- Explain the difference between primary and secondary sources.
- Identify reliable sources of research and information.
- Engage in activities that encourage critical thinking and real-world applications of civics.

Learning Standards

- New York State
 - Social Studies: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, and 5.4
 - ELA: Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies: RH1, RH2, RH4, RH6, RH7, and RH9
- Pennsylvania
 - History: 8.1.6, 8.1.9
 - Reading in History and Social Studies: 8.5.6-8A, 8.5.6-8B, 8.5.6-8F, 8.5.6-8H, 8.5.6-8I
 - Writing in History and Social Studies: 8.6.6-8B, 8.6.6-8C, 8.6.6-8D, 8.6.6-8F, 8.6.6-8H

Materials Needed

- For students:
 - Primary and Secondary Sources in a format for students
 - Source worksheet
 - Fact vs. Opinion cards
 - Bias in Images worksheet
- Teaching Materials for Primary vs. Secondary Sources
- Teaching Materials for Fact vs. Opinion and Bias
- Teaching Materials for Robert H. Jackson Introduction

Lesson Flow

1. Introduction (5-10 minutes)
 - a. Class discussion (could be a bellringer question):



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- i. What is the difference between seeing or hearing something for yourself and hearing about it from someone else?
 - ii. What is a fact about your school? What is an opinion about your school?
2. Instruction (10-15 minutes)
 - a. Primary vs. Secondary Sources (see Teacher Resource)
 - b. Fact vs. Opinion and Bias (see Teacher Resource)
 - c. Introduce Robert H. Jackson as a case study (see Teacher Resource)
3. Activities (20 minutes)
 - a. Primary and Secondary Source Identification
 - i. Students will be given several examples of primary and secondary sources pertaining to Robert H. Jackson. (see resource).
 - ii. Students should fill out the questions included for each source to help them investigate the source.
 - b. Fact or Opinion Identification
 - i. Students will be given several statements and must determine if they are facts or opinions (see resource).
 - c. Bias Identification
 - i. As a class, you will view 5 images (see resource).
 - ii. Students will write two captions for each of the images.
 1. One caption should be their attempt to find the “positive” bias, and one should be the “negative” bias.
 - iii. If you know it is appropriate, you can share some of the captions to show how different the students’ biases are even within the same classroom, using the same pictures.
4. Wrap-Up (5 minutes)
 - a. Discussion Questions:
 - i. Why does it matter whether a source is primary or secondary?
 - ii. How can we tell if a source is reliable?
 - iii. Why is it important to know the difference between fact and opinion?

Assessment/Evaluation

- Participation in discussions and activities
- Completion and accuracy of activity worksheets
- Could turn Wrap-Up into an exit ticket



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Teacher Resource: Primary and Secondary Sources

Two Types of Evidence: Primary and Secondary sources are the two types of evidence that historians use to learn about the past.

- Why It Matters:
 - Historians interpret evidence from both primary and secondary sources and then place it into context.
 - They take the evidence from sources and make inferences/draw conclusions about the past.

Primary Sources: Documents, artifacts, and other objects that are from/were created during the time period being studied.

- Examples:
 - Robert H. Jackson's speeches, letters, and court opinions
 - Photos of Jackson at Nuremberg
 - Newspaper articles from the 1940s reporting on the Nuremberg Trials or Jackson's court opinions

Secondary Sources: Things that tell us about the past that were created after the time period being studied. These can also be documents, artifacts, movies, and other objects.

- Examples:
 - A documentary about Robert H. Jackson, such as *Liberty Under Law: The Robert H. Jackson Story*
 - A biography about Jackson, such as *Robert H. Jackson: New Deal Lawyer, Supreme Court Justice, Nuremberg Prosecutor* by Gail Jarrow
 - Articles or stories about Jackson in modern publications

Discussion Questions:

- Why might a primary source be more helpful than a secondary source?
- How could a secondary source give you more background information?
- Can both be biased? How?



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Teacher Resource: Fact v. Opinion

Accurate and Reliable Sources: Primary and Secondary sources are not always reliable and accurate. Sources can be full of bias or opinions rather than facts.

- Why It Matters:
 - The strength of an argument increases when it is based on evidence from multiple sources
 - To construct a good argument, you should always question the bias and accuracy of information
 - To strengthen an argument, analyze various types of sources with multiple points of view to draw conclusions

Facts: Sources that rely on facts instead of opinions are more likely to be accurate and reliable.

- Why It Matters:
 - Facts are supported by evidence
 - Facts give specific information
 - Facts are definitive statements
 - Facts often contain numbers, dates, or ages
- Example:
 - Robert H. Jackson was an Associate Justice on the United States Supreme Court.
 - The Nuremberg Trials began in November 1945.

Opinions: Opinions are a personal belief or feeling and therefore not provable.

- Why It Matters:
 - Opinions are a person's judgments or views
 - Opinions are not necessarily based on fact or evidence
 - Opinions tell us how a person feels or thinks
 - Opinions are not as objective as facts
- Example:
 - Robert H. Jackson was the greatest legal thinker in American History.
 - The Supreme Court is the most important branch in the government.

Bias: Bias is when someone shows favor to one thing, person, or group rather than another.

- Example:



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- A newspaper only publishes articles supporting one political party, and not the other
- A biography of Robert H. Jackson that is written by a close personal friend

Discussion Questions:

- Can you find both facts and opinions in one article?
- How do you know if a source is biased?
- Why should we check more than one source when doing research?



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Teacher Resource: Robert H. Jackson Introduction

Who Was Robert H. Jackson?

Robert H. Jackson (1892-1954) was a U.S. Supreme Court Justice, Attorney General, Solicitor General, and the Chief U.S. Prosecutor at the Nuremberg Trials. His legacy is deeply connected to constitutional law, civil liberties, and the role of government in a democracy.

Key Contributions to Constitutional Law & Civic Understanding

- **Defender of Individual Rights:** In *West Virginia v. Barnette* (1943), Jackson wrote the majority opinion striking down a law that required students to salute the flag, emphasizing that the government cannot force citizens to express beliefs against their will.
- **Champion of Separation of Powers:** In *Youngstown v. Sawyer* (1952), Jackson's concurring opinion laid out a framework for evaluating presidential power, emphasizing the importance of checks and balances in the U.S. government. His tripartite analysis of executive authority is still widely cited in legal and political discussions today.
- **Pursuit of Justice in International Law:** As Chief Prosecutor at the Nuremberg Trials (1945-1946), Jackson played a key role in establishing legal precedents for prosecuting war crimes. His work at Nuremberg reinforced the principle that leaders could be held accountable for crimes against humanity and solidified the role of international law in protecting human rights.

Why Teach Robert H. Jackson in Civics Education?

- **Real-World Applications:** Jackson's cases address issues still relevant today, including freedom of speech, executive power, and government accountability.
- **Critical Thinking Development:** Analyzing his judicial opinions helps students understand how constitutional principles shape law and policy.
- **Civic Engagement Inspiration:** His commitment to justice encourages students to become informed and active citizens in their communities.



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Primary and Secondary Source Identification Activity

Questions for Worksheet:

1. What are the first things you notice about this source? List at least three observations:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
2. What questions do you have about this source? List at least three questions you would like to ask:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
3. Who do you think created this source? What materials would they have used to create it?
 - a.
4. What type of source do you think this is?
 - a.

Primary Source Examples:



Robert H. Jackson is taking the oath and officially becoming the U.S. Solicitor General. Robert Jackson succeeded Stanley Reed. Left to right: Attorney General Homer S. Cummings, Solicitor General Robert Jackson, Ugo Carusi (Executive Assistant to the Attorney General). March 5, 1938.



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U. S. Prosecutor Robert H. Jackson leaves the courtroom following the morning session. Directly behind him is his son, Ensign William E., working with the American Prosecution staff.

Robert H. Jackson leaving the courtroom in Nuremberg following the morning session. Directly behind him is his son, Ensign William E., working with the American Prosecution Staff. Photo taken by Raymond D'Addario. 1945.

Link to Jackson's Final Report to Truman: https://www.roberthjackson.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Justice_Jackson_s_Final_Report.pdf



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Pictured as he testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee is Assistant Attorney General Robert H. Jackson. March 11, 1937.

Link to YouTube Video of Robert H. Jackson's Opening Statement at Nuremberg:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L50OZSeDXeA&list=PLv57kxJZETcIIZ8DxFW60ij4iiqE0tzSH&index=4>

Link to Jackson's Korematsu Decision:

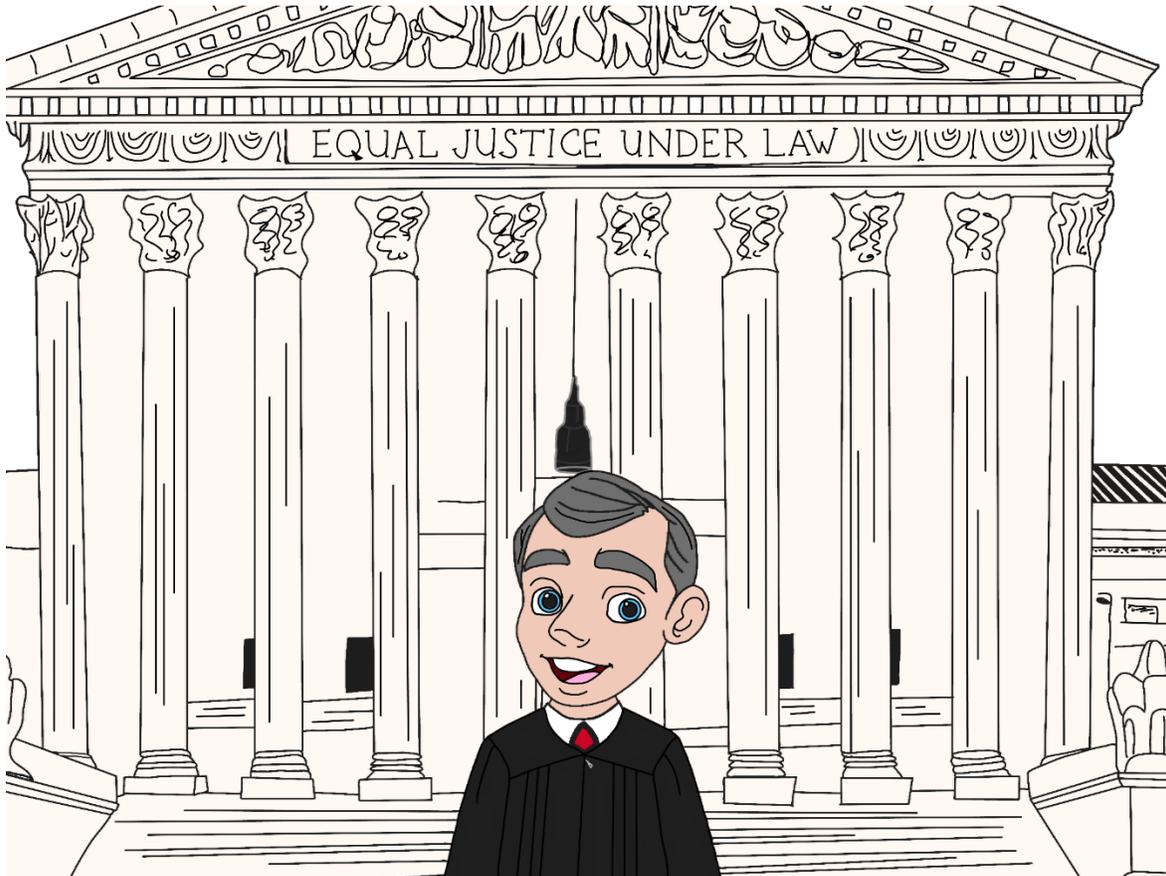
<https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/323/214/#tab-opinion-1938224>



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Secondary Source Examples:



Drawing of Justice Robert H. Jackson outside of the Supreme Court building.
January 2025.

Link to Article by Jackson's Nephew: <https://www.roberthjackson.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/A-Tribute-to-RHJ-Harold-Adams.pdf>

Link to Article about Jackson's Korematsu Decision:
https://www.thirteen.org/wnet/supremecourt/personality/landmark_korematsu.html

Link to YouTube Video with Interview about Jackson's Childhood:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPFXGdQ49qE>

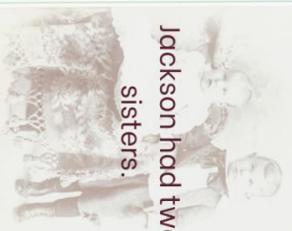
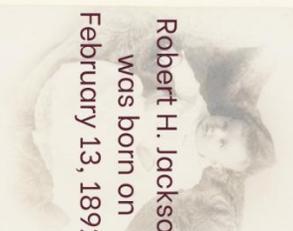
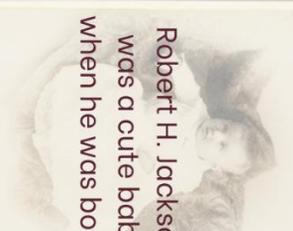
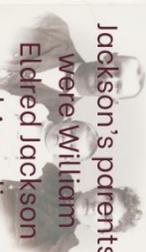
Link to YouTube Video with Father Moritz Fuchs:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BKfKsSMAKcM&list=PLv57kxJZETcKvMu0_fOF_57AgOFKidVgA&index=4



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Fact vs. Opinion Identification

 <p>Jackson had two sisters.</p>	 <p>Robert H. Jackson was born on February 13, 1892.</p>
 <p>Jackson's sister, Ella, was the funniest person in the family.</p>	 <p>Robert H. Jackson was a cute baby when he was born.</p>
 <p>Robert H. Jackson became a Supreme Court Justice in 1941.</p>	 <p>Jackson's parents were William Eldred Jackson and Angelina Houghwout.</p>
 <p>Robert H. Jackson was the most influential Supreme Court Justice of his era.</p>	 <p>Jackson's parents were the most inspiring couple in Spring Creek, PA.</p>



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Robert H. Jackson never graduated from law school.



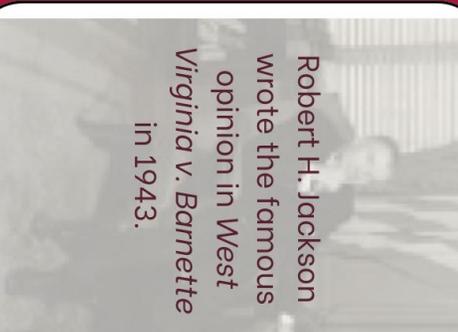
Jackson was appointed Chief Prosecutor at Nuremberg by President Truman.



Skipping law school made Robert H. Jackson a more practical and grounded lawyer.



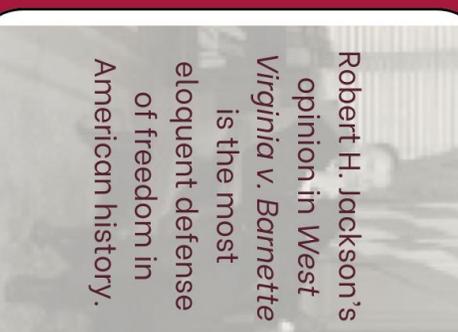
Jackson was the most deserving of all the appointed Nuremberg prosecutors.



Robert H. Jackson wrote the famous opinion in *West Virginia v. Barnette* in 1943.



Jackson delivered his opening statement at the Nuremberg Trials on November 21, 1945.



Robert H. Jackson's opinion in *West Virginia v. Barnette* is the most eloquent defense of freedom in American history.



Jackson's opening statement at Nuremberg was the most powerful speech in world history.



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Bias Identification





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