Robert H. Jackson at Nuremberg: Opening Statement Annotation Activity Directions

Read the excerpts provided from Justice Robert H. Jackson's Opening Statement at the Nuremberg Trials (November 21, 1945). As you read:

Underline → anything that helps show the structure of Jackson's speech (introductions, transitions, definitions, lists, "we will show...," "first...next..." etc.)

Circle → words or phrases that reveal tone
(formal, urgent, moral, sober, hopeful, condemnatory, logical)

Highlight → examples of Jackson's argument or evidence
(claims, reasons, facts, legal principles, moral reasoning)

Then answer the questions that follow.

Guided Questions

1. What phrases show how Jackson organizes his argument?
2. How does he prepare his audience for what will follow in the trial?
3. Which words reveal Jackson's tone? Choose 3–5 circled words and describe the tone they create.
4. Why might Jackson choose such a tone for this moment?
5. What are Jackson's main claims about why the trial is necessary?
6. How does he support those claims with evidence or logic?
7. Which line do you think is the strongest? Why?