



# ROBERT H. JACKSON AT NUREMBERG

## Lesson Plan for Grades 6-12

### Teacher Resource: Brief Overview of Robert H. Jackson

Robert H. Jackson (1892–1954) was one of the most influential American lawyers and jurists of the twentieth century. Born in Frewsburg, New York, Jackson rose from small-town roots to serve in some of the highest legal positions in the United States. Although he never earned a formal law degree, he became a respected attorney, argued major cases before the Supreme Court, and quickly built a national reputation for clarity of thought and powerful writing.

Jackson held three major federal roles:

- U.S. Solicitor General (1938–1940) – representing the United States before the Supreme Court, where he won the vast majority of his cases.
- U.S. Attorney General (1940–1941) – leading the Department of Justice during a period of major constitutional and national security issues.
- Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court (1941–1954) – known for his strong, often eloquent opinions on civil liberties, separation of powers, and fairness in the justice system.

Jackson’s most globally significant contribution came in 1945, when President Truman appointed him Chief U.S. Prosecutor at the Nuremberg Trials. There, Jackson led the prosecution of high-ranking Nazi leaders and helped establish new principles of international criminal law. His Opening Statement at Nuremberg, often called one of the greatest speeches of the 20th century, insisted that even the most powerful must be held accountable under the rule of law.

Throughout his career, Jackson championed fairness, due process, and the idea that law must stand above politics and vengeance. His legacy continues to shape both American constitutional law and international justice.