



HOW TO HAVE A CONVERSATION

Lesson Plan for Grades 4-12

Teacher Resource: Brief Overview of Robert H. Jackson

Overview:

Robert H. Jackson (1892-1954) served as U.S. Solicitor General, Attorney General, and Associate Justice of the Supreme Court before becoming the Chief U.S. Prosecutor at the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg after World War II.

Born in Spring Creek, PA, and raised in Frewsburg, NY, Jackson did not go to college and only studied law for one year at Albany Law School before completing legal education through apprenticeship. He rose to national prominence through his sharp intellect, clear writing, and unwavering belief that justice depends on reasoned, respectful dialogue and fair process. His legacy continues to guide conversations about democracy, civil liberties, and the rule of law.

Key Ideas:

- **Reason and Fairness:** Jackson believed that democracy thrives when citizens think critically, listen carefully, and treat others with respect.
- **Civic Responsibility:** He argued that citizens, not just the government, are responsible for protecting democracy and holding power accountable.
- **Justice through Dialogue:** In his speeches and opinions, Jackson demonstrated that justice begins with understanding different perspectives before making judgments.
- **Respectful Disagreement:** Whether in the Supreme Court or at Nuremberg, Jackson modeled how to engage in disagreement without hostility, grounded in evidence and empathy.