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| Text Why Nuremberg Matters Common Core Writing AssignmentRemarks Of Norbert Ehrenfreund Retired Judge of the Superior Court, State of CaliforniaGiven at the Robert H. Jackson Center in Jamestown, NY June 13, 2005 | Annotate |
| As World War Two came to a close in the summer of 1945, the representatives of the four Allied powers – Great Britain, the Soviet Union, France and the United States – met in London to decide if there should be an international trial. And the world was enraged. What was this talk of trial? For these **despicable** characters? Many wondered why in the world they deserved even a single day in a court of law. Do away with them! Kill them! Hang them! A trial would only give them a chance to spout their Nazi propaganda.  And all this rage, all the cries for revenge coming from all over the world, all the criticism of this conference for even considering a trial, one man stood up in London and called for justice. One man called for a fair trial. That man was **Robert Jackson.**  Jackson was a Justice of the United States Supreme Court but he was not speaking there in that **capacity**. No. He was speaking as the Chief Prosecutor for the United States in the event the matter ever came to trial. Just a few weeks before, the new president, Harry Truman, asked Jackson to take the job of Chief Prosecutor. It was agreed he would be on temporary leave and when the trial was over – no one knew how long it would last – he could return to his seat on the Court. Jackson agreed and went to London.  Robert Jackson had a passion for justice and peace. He wanted to **deter** war and the atrocities of war. He feared that civilization could not survive another world war. He saw this trial as an opportunity to stop it from happening. He wanted to send a message to warlike leaders across the world: If you wage an aggressive war or commit war crimes, then you can be brought before a court of law and face serious consequences.  Justice must be done, Jackson told the conference in London. A fair trial for every **defendant.** Some of the Allies looked at him as if in shock. In essence they said: *Do you mean a fair trial for Hermann Goering, second in command to Adolf Hitler, chief of the Gestapo? He ordered the concentration camps. A fair trial for him?* Yes, Jackson said.  Ladies and gentlemen, I say to you this was an extraordinary event; a milestone in legal history. It was a decision that ignited a revolution in international law because for the first time the rule of law was being applied to leaders of nations. It was a moment when America stepped forward and took over the **moral leadership** of the world.  Jackson set forth for all civilization a very simple but profound principle. That every person accused of crime, no matter how **heinous** that crime may be, no matter how high or low that person’s status is entitled to a fair hearing. We look at that principle today and say oh, of course. We take it for granted. That is obvious, we say. But it was not so obvious then.  It was a time that ranks with that other time in history when human beings no longer punished each other by the thirst for revenge, but for the first time let reason and justice govern punishment. The trials were held in the German city of **Nuremberg,** and when they were over, Jackson won convictions on eighteen of the 22 major Nazi leaders. Of the eighteen found guilty in court, eleven were sentenced to hang. Of those eleven, ten were hanged  Now sixty years have passed since Nuremberg. He changed the world of justice forever. First of all it was a triumph of good over evil. Jackson brought down the worst criminals in history. I say he did that although there were other prosecutors. But he was the engineer, the driving force, of the Nuremberg trial.  He showed how the rule of law could be applied to punish, if not prevent, the atrocities of war. For the first time heads of state could be held **accountable,** individually accountable, for war crimes. No longer would they be able to hold up their status as a shield against prosecution.  He set in motion the human rights movement. For the first time citizens had a right to complain if they were abused by their government. A new crime, Crimes Against Humanity, came into being.  He showed how low a highly civilized nation could sink under ruthless dictatorship. He created the principles for future **war crimes** trials; that it is no defense for alleged war criminals to say they were merely obeying orders as so many tried to do at Nuremberg. He prevented the Nazi leaders from becoming martyrs which they would have done had there been no trial.  And one more thing, perhaps the most important of all. A few years ago the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington conducted a poll to see what Americans thought of the Holocaust. The poll showed – and this is hard to believe – that up to twenty percent of Americans either doubted or did not believe that the Holocaust ever occurred but that it was only a myth **concocted** by the Jewish people.  But the trial record shows what the Nazis did. More than any other single event, Nuremberg revealed the nature of the Holocaust. Had there been no trial, had the Nazi leaders been taken out in the yard and shot without trial, had Jackson not won his fight for a full and fair hearing, that figure of twenty percent who deny the Holocaust would be much greater.  Ladies and gentlemen, as Americans we are proud of our tradition of fair trial and how it continues to spread across the world. Americans have fought and died for it and will do so much again. And some evening, in the quiet of your room or your study, you might sit back and think of the great events in history that shaped this system of justice. You might think of the Magna Carta, the invention of the writ of habeas corpus, the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights, the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.  I suggest to you today that you might want to add another event to that list: Robert Jackson’s victory in London for a fair trial at Nuremberg, a victory for him, a greater victory for humanity.  Thank you. | Define *despicable*  *What was Jackson’s main goal?*  Define *capacity*  Define *deter*  Define *defendant*  Define *moral leadership*  Define *heinous*  *What happened at Nuremberg?*  Define *accountable*  Define *war crimes*  Define *concocted*  02NAZIjackson021.jpg  Justice Jackson at the Nuremberg Trials of the Nazis  1945 |

Questions on what you read:

Please answer the following questions based on what you just read:

1. What is the text structure of this passage?
2. Sequence
3. Cause and Effect
4. Compare and Contrast
5. Chronological Order
6. Who was Robert Jackson?
7. An American general during World War Two
8. The person who invented the term “Genocide”.
9. The Chief Prosecutor of the Nuremberg Trials
10. A British Lawyer
11. What is the tone of the passage?
12. Sarcastic
13. Hopeful
14. Angry
15. Sad
16. What is MOST LIKELY the author’s purpose for writing this article?
17. Inform
18. Entertain
19. Persuade

*Writing about what you read…*

**Directions:** Please write your response on the following lines. Using clues from the passage, ***describe at least three ways that the Nuremberg Trials were “a victory for humanity”.***

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**Writing Rubric**

5 4 3 2 1 Step-Up-to-Writing Format

5 4 3 2 1 Mechanics

5 4 3 2 1 Complete Sentences

5 4 3 2 1 Content

**Total Score \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ / 20, or \_\_\_\_\_\_/100**