

World War II and the Nuremberg Trials Lesson Narrative

The Content and Standard:

World War II and the Nuremberg Trials

2024 ALCOS SSE AL.SS.9.12a: Explain the origins, conduct, and outcomes of the Nuremberg Trials and Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal.

The Persistent Issue Question:

What should society do to promote fairness and justice for people who live within its jurisdiction?

The Topic-Specific Central Question:

What is the best method to pursue justice following the Holocaust?

Who decides how justice is enacted following an event like the Holocaust?

Who gets held accountable for crimes like the Holocaust?

The Culminating Activity: Trials and Tribunal Thinkaloud

In jigsaw groups, students will learn about some of the history and criteria crimes against humanity and peace, and then move into new groups, where they will be asked to organize and explain how they would put different historical figures on trial.

Narrative:

This lesson seeks to engage students in identifying, explaining, and evaluating how World War II and the Holocaust led to the rise of Human Rights as we comprehend and utilize them today.

This lesson will come at the end of a 9th-grade classroom's studies of World War II. The unit will connect to content taught about and before the war and then connect to the Crimes against Humanity and Peace that became one of the biggest legacies of the Nuremberg Trials. After students learn about these crimes and use a think-aloud format to discuss how some of the war criminal should be judged and tried, they will conclude with a discussion and writing assignment regarding this was the best means to approach justice following the Holocaust.

Lesson Outline and Summary:

- Day 1: Defining the Crimes. Students take a pre-test, learn the four categories of Nuremberg war crimes, and analyze historical examples (e.g., the Holocaust, the invasion of Poland).

- Day 2: The Mock Tribunal. Students use modern analogies (bullying/social media) to frame accountability, review case profiles of historical figures with varying degrees of guilt, and use a choice board to deliberate on their sentences.
- Day 3: Reflection & Assessment. Students wrap up by writing a final essay comparing Holocaust justice with modern-day accountability.

Jigsaw of a few perspectives:

Stances & Primary Sources:

Crimes against Humanity: Testimony of holocaust survivor

Crimes against Humanity: Member of the Hitler Youth (following orders)

Crimes against Peace: Look at the London Blitz

Crimes against Peace: Look at Germany's invasions (statistics and looking at German invasion of Russia)