Justice After War

How two tribunals judged wartime leaders

SS24.WH.12a "Explain the origins, conduct, and outcomes of the Nuremberg Trials and Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details about why or how the courts began, circle two details about how the trials worked, and put a star beside two details about their results or lasting effects.

Two Courts After World War II

1 When World War II ended in 1945, Allied forces faced evidence of planned invasions, mass murder, and abuse of prisoners. They chose trials rather than punishing captured leaders without hearings. The United States, Britain, France, and the Soviet Union created the International Military Tribunal through the London Charter for a trial in Nuremberg, Germany. Nuremberg had hosted huge Nazi rallies, so holding court there carried symbolic weight. In Asia, Allied authorities under U.S. General Douglas MacArthur established the International Military Tribunal for the Far East in Tokyo, Japan. Both courts aimed to hold individuals, not entire nations, responsible for wartime crimes.

2 At Nuremberg, the main trial ran from 1945 to 1946. Prosecutors charged leading Nazis with crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. They used captured government documents, film, and witness testimony to show how leaders planned aggressive war and directed atrocities. In Tokyo, the main trial ran from 1946 to 1948. Prosecutors examined Japan's wars of aggression and violence against civilians and prisoners of war. Judges from Allied countries heard the Tokyo case, while judges from the four powers that created the Nuremberg court heard that case. Defendants at both trials had lawyers and could challenge evidence.

3 Both tribunals convicted many leaders, sentencing some to death and others to prison. Nuremberg also acquitted three defendants; Tokyo's final judgments acquitted none of the defendants who remained on trial. The trials strengthened the idea that leaders can be held personally responsible for international crimes, even when they claim they were following orders. They also left questions about fairness: the victors judged the defeated, and neither tribunal tried Allied leaders for wartime actions. Japan's emperor, Hirohito, was not charged at Tokyo. Despite those limits, later international courts drew on the trials' example of using evidence and public hearings to pursue accountability.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did the Allies establish tribunals after the war, and who established the court in each location?

2. How did both trials examine alleged crimes, and how did the groups of judges differ?

3. How did the final judgments at Nuremberg and Tokyo differ, and what idea about leaders did the trials strengthen?

4. Why might someone question the trials' fairness, even though later courts drew on their example?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five-sentence museum label explaining why these two trials were turning points but not a complete solution. Compare how they began and how they worked, then explain a shared result and one limit using evidence from the passage.

ANSWER KEY

Justice After War

GRADE 9 · SS24.WH.12a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details about why or how the courts began, circle two details about how the trials worked, and put a star beside two details about their results or lasting effects. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did the Allies establish tribunals after the war, and who established the court in each location?	**The Allies sought to hold individual leaders responsible through hearings. Four Allied powers created the Nuremberg court, while Allied authorities under General MacArthur established the Tokyo court.**
2	How did both trials examine alleged crimes, and how did the groups of judges differ?	**Prosecutors presented evidence, and defendants had lawyers who could challenge it. Judges from the four powers that created the Nuremberg court heard its case; judges from Allied countries heard the Tokyo case.**
3	How did the final judgments at Nuremberg and Tokyo differ, and what idea about leaders did the trials strengthen?	**Both courts convicted leaders, but Nuremberg acquitted three defendants while Tokyo acquitted none who remained on trial. The trials strengthened the idea that leaders can be personally responsible for international crimes.**
4	Why might someone question the trials' fairness, even though later courts drew on their example?	**The victors judged the defeated, neither tribunal tried Allied leaders, and Japan's emperor was not charged at Tokyo.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

After World War II, Allied powers formed courts in Nuremberg and Tokyo to hold wartime leaders accountable instead of punishing them without hearings. The Nuremberg court came from an agreement among four Allied powers, while Allied authorities under General MacArthur set up the Tokyo court. Both courts heard evidence, and defendants could use lawyers to challenge it. Their convictions helped establish that individual leaders could answer for international crimes. Yet neither court tried Allied leaders, so the trials advanced accountability without applying it to every side.

Accept accurate paraphrases grounded in the passage. For the museum label, look for a comparison of the tribunals' origins and conduct, a shared outcome, and a specific limit.