



This guide was written and compiled by Irma Moke, Teacher—Fairfax County Public Schools and Barbara Vollmer, Librarian—Fairfax County Public Schools

James I. Robertson, Jr.

A native of Danville, Virginia, James I. Robertson, Jr., developed his keen interest in Civil War studies when he first learned that his great-grandfather had been a confederate soldier and a cook for General Robert E. Lee. He has received every major award given in the field of Civil War history and is currently an Alumni Distinguished Professor in History at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, History Department, in Blacksburg, Virginia.

Dr. Robertson has authored the award-winning books *General A. P. Hill, Soldiers Blue and Gray*, and *Civil War! America Becomes One Nation*. His 1997 biography, *Stonewall Jackson: The Man, The Soldier, The Legend*, was a main selection of two major book clubs and won eight national awards. Movie rights for the book have been purchased. Besides his weekly broadcast carried by 11 public radio stations, he appears regularly in Civil War programs on the Arts & Entertainment Network, the History Channel, and public television.

Standing Like a Stone Wall: The Life of General Thomas J. Jackson is his latest book. He has distilled the information from his 1997 biography about Jackson to enable a younger audience to gain a well-rounded portrait of the man. Readers learn about the events that shaped Jackson's life, from his orphaned childhood to his emergence as a famous Confederate general.

Suggested Activities

Standing Like a Stone Wall: The Life of General Thomas J. Jackson

1. Divide the class into groups of four. Assign each group to read a specific chapter of the book. After each cooperative learning group reads its assigned chapter, direct the students to report the contents to the class in chronological order. Groups may create visual presentations. This method provides an overview of the entire book. Instruction can be differentiated, by the teacher, through guided reading groups and increased teacher assistance as needed.
2. After students have read the book, assign pairs of students to use the Internet and other resources to search for book reviews. Students may write their own reviews before or after searching the Internet. Cooperative groups can discuss the different reviews and show comparisons using Venn diagrams).
3. Direct the class (or small groups) to create an illustrated time line of important events portrayed in the book.
4. Students may use software that creates graphic organizers (for example, Inspiration®) to map important events in Jackson's life.
5. Divide students into pairs. Direct each pair to read sections of the book and to give a summary to the class noting Jackson's specific character traits.



6. The author uses many primary sources, including Jackson's letters to his wife and other family members as well as correspondence with other military men. Direct students to examine the footnotes and the extensive bibliography at the end of the book. Discuss with students the benefits or pitfalls of using primary sources in research.
7. Ask students to use a T-chart to illustrate Jackson's strengths and weaknesses as a man.
8. Ask students to review the list of character traits listed below. Then direct individuals or cooperative groups to select five or more traits and to give examples of Jackson's actions that demonstrate each quality. Students could cite specific examples, including pages where the information was found.

Words that have been used to describe Stonewall Jackson:

honest	courteous	modest
dutiful	secretive	brilliant military strategist
reserved	religious	eccentric
solitary	shy	responsible
disciplined	tenacious	hard-working
orderly	intense	fearless
heroic	iron-willed	inflexible
trusted	poor teacher	respected education
genius	foolhardy	concerned for others

9. Direct students to use the Internet and other resources to research information about how Thomas J. Jackson earned the nickname "Stone Wall."
10. Ask students to write about how Jackson's religious faith permeated all aspects of his life.
11. Direct students to use the Internet and other resources to research the historical importance of the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia.
12. Give students a map of Virginia. Ask students to mark the locations of Civil War battles.
13. Ask each student to describe one of the battles detailed in the book and to create a map to explain the military strategies that Jackson used.