

Process Paper

What does it mean to break barriers? I believe that the idea of “Breaking Barriers” means to fragment standards or ideas set by society and present unfamiliar and innovative ideas, whether it or its effects be positive or negative. As I searched for ideas of an interesting topic for this year’s competition, I came across a topic that fell under the topic of Women’s Suffrage: The Suffragettes. Captivated by their unique name, I continued to look further into who these passionate and eloquent women were, watching countless videos and reading through numerous articles. With each article I read and each documentary I watched, I felt more connected and grateful to these fearless women for their courage and sacrifice in order to gain Women’s Right to Vote. It is for this reason that I chose to learn about the Suffragettes for this year’s National History Day theme, “Breaking Barriers”.

I began my research by gaining an understanding of the basic timeline of the Suffragette Movement in the UK. Based on this timeline, I delved deeper into this topic, researching the specifics of the Suffragette movement, such as leaders, important events, and important laws that were passed that both progressed and hindered the Women’s Suffrage Movement in the UK. I was able to gain a deeper understanding of society’s ideology during this movement and period in time by using primary sources, such as newspapers, newsreels, and letters from the Suffragette Movement. These sources helped me better connect and understand the ideas of those who were for and against the Suffragette Movement.

I chose to compete in the website category because I felt the most comfortable with it and felt that I could be the most creative with it. Since I had competed in the website category for National History Day in the past, I was able to work on the project much more efficiently. This allowed me to better focus on the research and visual aspects of the website. Competing in the website category was the most beneficial way to create my National History Day project.

Although society had firmly established ideologies that hindered women's rights, the Suffragette Movement questioned ideas of femininity, such as their expectation to be submissive, obedient, and dutiful daughters, mothers, and wives. They defied society's standards for women and gained voting rights for women in ways that had never been done before. They fought back in controversial ways, such as bombings, arson, and the smashing of public building windows, resulting in an impact larger than the methods of previous peaceful movements. The efforts of the Suffragettes eventually helped pass the Representation of the People Act and gained women the right to vote. The Suffragettes broke barriers of the ideology of domesticity and gained women the right to vote in the UK.