

Sister Kenny: The Pioneer of Physical Therapy

Process Paper

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How did you choose your topic?

When choosing a topic, I wanted to choose a person or event that I've never heard about that is within a topic I have never researched. I've covered science and general historical events but I've never looked into the medical field. When I was browsing the web for relevant historical figures, Sister Kenny stood out to me not only because of what she was able to bring to the world, but also the tough journey she went through to get there. I quickly realized she was the epitome of a pioneer, and was sure her story was the perfect one to share.

Conducting research?

I start my research by browsing through academic bases to gain some general background knowledge. After seeing what aspects of her story would be most interesting to implement in my website, I dive further into it, by exploring primary sources like newspapers from online archives. There is a lot of primary source material available out there, but using secondary sources gave me direction for my argument, and thus it was relatively easy to navigate. Because the internet is filled with misinformation, I made it a priority to use credible sources and to fact check between them.

Why did I choose my category and how did I create my project?

I made a website for my project because of the flexible and interactive nature of it. Websites allow me to design, format, color, and use multimedia, which allows me to make historical events more engaging for the average person browsing the internet. I believe presenting information in an engaging, intuitive way is an essential communication skill, and by making websites, I'm able to exercise this skill.

How does the topic relate to the theme?

The topic is on Sister Kenny, a nurse, who revolutionized the treatment for polio and thus created physical therapy. Her story is perfectly suited for the theme, Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas, because she is a pioneer who transcended the borders of her home country to spread new ideas to cross the frontier of outdated treatment knowledge among the medical community. Even though she wasn't able to get a formal education, she persevered using creativity, grit, and adaptability to cross that front despite the odds. With this, she was successful in her goal and was able to bring the methodology of physical therapy to the world.