

Calamity at Kent State

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Performance

Process Paper

How I chose my topic:

The theme is debate and diplomacy, and in one simple word, controversy. I went through the overview packet we were given, and highlighted the topics of interest to me. When I reviewed all of the highlighted topics, I chose the Kent State shootings. At the time, I did not know much about the topic, so I needed to plan my approach. I thought that researching the topic before beginning my presentation was the perfect way to absorb the knowledge and information I needed. I was drawn in. The history and the controversy were like a game, and I was reading all I could about my newly discovered topic.

How I conducted my research:

My research began by looking for primary resources. I downloaded books on my Kindle, and checked books out of the public library. I also focused on some main amendments of the Constitution. Then I traveled to Kent State University, where I visited the May 4th Resource Center in the library. There I reviewed many books, letters, pamphlets and newspaper articles related to the shootings. I also walked along the May 4th Memorial Tour pathway and listened to the May 4th Walking Tour audio documentary. Finally, I contacted several resources for oral history accounts, including a Kent State student and National Guardsman. Then, I then prepared a short summary of the basic viewpoints of my topic.

How I selected my presentation category and created my project:

I chose the performance category as a result of my love for the theater. I am very animated and love to portray history through drama and acting. It brings the history to life, more than just researching and writing about it. My topic is presented to the audience in a lively manner, and they can watch and relate to it. Since I chose the category of performance, I knew I would need costumes for my presentation. After completing my script, I assembled a costume for both my characters. In order to allow me to change costumes during the presentation, I prepared a screen.

How my project relates to the National History Day theme:

My topic relates to the theme because of the shootings themselves, and the manner in which they took place. Based on different perspectives and theories that have been considered, one cannot be sure as to the exact cause. The many unanswered questions that remain to this day are just one example of controversy. Based on the information from both sides, it can be debated as to whether or not the National Guardsmen fired in self defense. It can also be debated whether the Kent State shootings can be considered a success or a failure. They were a success, as many believed the associated protests shortened the Vietnam War. They were a failure because they divided the county and resulted in the death of four young people, and the injury of nine others. Altogether, this topic was an excellent example of debate and diplomacy.