

Process Paper

How did I choose my topic?

I had long been interested in women's suffrage, so I knew right away that I would select a topic related to that for my National History Day project. I first looked into American suffragettes, but I had already learned about them in school, and I wanted to research something more original. When I realized that New Zealand was the first country in the world to grant women the right to vote, I immediately started looking into suffragettes from New Zealand. As soon as I found Kate Sheppard, a leading New Zealand suffragette who constantly utilized communication in her work, I knew I had also found my topic.

How did I conduct my research?

Despite the fact that most libraries and research centers are currently closed down due to the pandemic, I was still able to find many good resources. I attended a research rendezvous at my local library, where librarians helped me to find books on my topic. I also explored Google Books, where I found many helpful resources. As I knew the Library of Congress was a helpful tool for research concerning American suffragettes, I looked into a New Zealand equivalent of it as well. I found and was able to utilize New Zealand's online archives, where I discovered primary source photographs, articles, and documents.

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

I decided to make a website for my project because there were a wealth of images related to my topic which I wanted to display, a website was easy to make in this virtual environment,

and website building is an important life skill. To create my project, I first had to learn how to navigate the NHD website builder. Once I figured out how to insert images, text, and videos, I started to construct my website. From there, I added the text and multimedia that I wanted to display and formatted the website to make it look more refined. I continued this until the project was completed.

How does my topic relate to the theme?

Kate Sheppard and the other New Zealand suffragettes could not have accomplished anything without communication. In fact, throughout every stage of their movement, communication was the suffragettes' most important tool. In order to win support for their campaign, the suffragettes had to communicate with both the public and the government. They organized public events, gave speeches, and printed newspaper articles and pamphlets. Then, to communicate with the government, they collected signatures for gigantic petitions and presented them to Parliament. Had the suffragettes failed to communicate effectively, their cause would not have gained the necessary support, and would surely have failed.