

Rock and Roll for a Cause: Live Aid 1985

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Senior Division

Group Website

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Process Paper

How did we choose our topic?

We chose our topic because we wanted something that encompassed the theme this year that was a little outside the box. We are both very passionate musicians and a lot of our interests revolve around music and the community it builds. In the media today, we witness both the breaking of cultural barriers with the flow of North American and European music to the rest of the world as well as our consumption of music from places such as Asia and South America. We found Live Aid to be a fascinating event that exemplified music's ability to break barriers and help people.

How did we conduct our research?

We did our initial research on several academic databases such as EBSCO and Gale. From these databases, we were able to gather enough secondary sources to give us an overview of Live Aid and the people involved. The databases also gave us access to primary sources, such as newspapers and magazine articles. We read articles from The New York Times, Forbes, Rolling Stones Magazine, among others. Following our initial web research, we made an appointment at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Library and Archives to make use of their resources and documents. At the archives, we were able to access more newspaper and magazine articles, as well as photographs of the concert. That research was integral to our project and helped us understand Live Aid from the perspective of those who experienced it.

How did we choose our category and create our project?

For our project, we decided to create a website. A website allowed us to showcase our creativity, as well as our writing and research skills. Creating a website also helped us to balance

our project with our busy schedules, as we could work on it individually when we were unable to meet up. In order to create our project, we collaborated on the overall content, but divided up the work based on our strengths, with one of us designing the website and one of us creating most of the citations and annotations.

How does our topic relate to this year's theme?

At the time it occurred, Live Aid was hailed as the most ambitious rock concert of all time. It consisted of two simultaneous concerts, lasting a total of 16 hours and boasting a lineup of some of the most iconic names in rock music. This achievement alone could be enough to qualify Live Aid for the theme of "Breaking Barriers," however the event wasn't planned for purely entertainment purposes. Live Aid marked one of the first times in the history of rock music that musicians used their popularity for the purpose of charity. Bob Geldof, the mind behind the creation of Live Aid, wanted to use the popularity of rock musicians to help alleviate famine in Ethiopia. It is this concept-- the idea that popularity can be leveraged for charitable purposes-- that allowed Live Aid to truly "break barriers" in both the music industry and the entire entertainment industry.