

Process Paper

Going into the research process, we were interested in studying a topic that would expand our historical knowledge beyond events taught in our high school classes. After reading a fictional book about a young woman growing up during the Troubles, we became intrigued by the topic. At the time, Northern Ireland had been in the news due to rising tensions in the territory following Brexit and we felt it would be an especially pertinent event to study. Researching this topic gave us insight into not only the sectarian violence of the Troubles, but the impacts of British colonization on the island. We wanted to be creative with the theme and challenge ourselves to reexamine the definition of frontiers. We were interested in focusing on frontiers as physical borders, which were at the heart of the conflict during the Troubles. This line of thinking prompted us to research how physical borders perpetuate conflict globally, not only in Northern Ireland.

We began our research by gaining background knowledge through reading articles and primary resources. We found the book *The Centre Cannot Hold* by Tom Collins and the special report *Northern Ireland* from the London Sunday Times Insight Team both very informative sources that helped us understand the different, and sometimes contrasting, perspectives of the Troubles. After gaining general knowledge, we dove deeper into our research. At the East Side Freedom Library, we discovered books, both primary and secondary, that developed our nuanced understanding of the time period. In addition, we visited the Wilson Library at the University of Minnesota where we found a large collection of books on Northern Ireland, as well as US government reports on foreign policy developments in the region, which aided our comprehensive research.

Choosing to present our project as a documentary was a relatively easy decision because of our love for the medium, which allows us to creatively convey our research. With a time limit rather than word limit, we had more freedom with what we were able to include in our argument. After writing and revising our script, we recorded our narration in GarageBand. With this recording, we used Final Cut Pro to compile our documentary. Using video, images, and historical footage along with graphics we created, we visually represented our research in a way that engages the audience.

Lasting nearly three decades, the Troubles was a period of sectarian violence between Catholic nationalists and Protestant unionists in Northern Ireland. Erupting in 1968 after a series of civil rights marches, the conflict reflected rising distrust along ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic lines and led to an era of fighting over borders. Fortified frontiers went up between Protestant and Catholic neighborhoods, enforcing segregation and inciting division. There would be over 3,500 deaths before the Good Friday Agreement, a permanent ceasefire, was signed in 1998. However, in the 21st century, many of the physical frontiers separating once integrated Protestant and Catholic neighborhoods remain.