

I chose my topic after a conversation with my parents. I originally was in a partnership with a different topic, but I realized that I wasn't very interested in the topic and that I would not have fun working on the project. After this realization, I had a conversation with my parents where my dad, born in Ireland, proposed the idea of the Good Friday Agreement. I had heard about the Troubles, Bloody Sunday and the peace process, but had never really known the entire story.

The Belfast Agreement was difficult and easy to find sources for at the same time. On one hand it was easy because it happened recently enough to be in newspaper archives and to have pictures and videos. On the other hand, it was hard because not many people in the US knew enough about the process to be able to direct me to an expert or to great primary sources. Once I found the CAIN database, with an abundance of primary sources varying from statements and speeches to poll results, I started to understand the sequence of events and the goals of the peace process.

Once I got enough research to support my thesis statement, I began to consider the different paths I could go concerning my presentation. I had prior experience working with digital design. I also had to think about how I could work on it outside of school. I would've thought more about doing an exhibit, but the fact that I could only work on it during class or when I was at school made me lean more towards doing a website. I had to use the NHD Website Builder for this project. Since I had never used this before, it took a while to get used to. I quickly understood most of the buttons and their functions.

The Good Friday Agreement relates to this year's theme of Breaking Barriers because it broke four major barriers. A violence barrier, a political barrier, a community barrier and barriers of inequality. The violence barrier was constant fighting and killing of people and political leaders from all parties. It was broken by decommissioning which was a part of the final agreement. The next barrier was the inequality between religious groups especially in Northern Ireland. Prior to the agreement, Catholics were often discriminated against by Protestants because of the Protestants association with Britain. The agreement evened out this imbalance between the two groups. The third barrier can be linked between the first two as community relations. Once the Catholics and Protestants stopped firing at each other and stopped being discriminated against, tensions went down. They no longer feared each other as much. The final barrier that was broken was a barrier in between political groups. Political groups were known not to effectively communicate with each other. The agreement forced them to create relationships and understand how to communicate with one another. As all of this proves, the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement broken many barriers.