

Process Paper

When thinking of an appealing topic to research, I decided to think about interesting events that I had read historical fiction books about. When I was younger, I used to only read historical fiction books but never thought to look into the real events that took place in them. I remembered that one of them focused on the first female anatomist, Alessandra Giliani, and started to wonder what the overall history of anatomy was like. I did some simple research like reading secondary sources and decided that I would focus on the history of dissections.

For my research, I started out reading books about general controversies with death rights. Most of it was funeral rights, so I had to start to focus on rights of the body after death. I also started with a lot of biographies of important anatomists which helped me put a face and person in context as I read the history later. After that, I moved on to reading articles on the internet. There were a lot more resources about some lesser known topics on the internet than in the books in the library, like Herophilus and Frederick II allowing dissections. Then, I contacted some experts from museums that I had found the websites of during my research asking what they considered important in the history of dissections and if they had any interesting primary sources in their collections. After that, I searched internet archives for newspapers, documents, and letters as primary sources. I realised during my research that I had a bias, that I thought dissections were good, so I went back and checked that my research had opinions from the other side as well.

I selected the website category because I had made simple websites in the past and wanted to expand on my skills. I also thought it'd be the best option because there were a lot of images and the way the information went through time that it would be displayed better as a website rather than the other categories. Also, I made an exhibit in last year's competition and wanted to try something new.

My topic relates to rights and responsibilities because it addresses the rights of the dead and how they changed, the rights of the living to use the dead, the responsibilities of the dead (as some believed) to allow themselves to be used for dissections, and the responsibility of the living to protect the rights, avoid abusing human remains, and gaining knowledge from the dissections rather than them being wasted.