

Process Paper

When picking our topic, our group looked for an area in which we were all interested that would fit within the theme of “Leadership and Legacy.” In accordance with these ideas, we chose Nellie Bly; a pioneer in the field of stunt journalism, who paved the way for females in the workforce while bringing about positive change in the form of reforms.

To begin our research, we looked for articles that Nellie Bly had written in order to get a sense of who she was as a writer and reformer, and continued to do this throughout the rest of our research. After reviewing the primary sources written by Bly, we sought information that would help us put her in a historical and societal context in order to understand the significance of Bly’s leadership and resulting legacy. We did this by utilizing both primary and broad-context secondary sources, and looking for more specific articles when we wanted to know about particular aspects of Bly’s leadership and legacy. We also looked into key events, places, and figures that Bly mentioned in her articles. We were able to secure an interview with the leading expert on Nellie Bly; Brooke Kroeger, author of the comprehensive biography *Nellie Bly: Daredevil, Reporter, Feminist*, who provided us with rare information that had taken her years to research. The combination of our own research and the information provided by our interview candidates provided us with a comprehensive, synthesized view of Nellie Bly and her significance.

We selected our presentation category by considering our skills, and decided we would be able to construct a visually pleasing and informative website because of our collectively strong organizational and creative skills. In terms of the organization of our website, we carefully constructed a thesis and argument that could be logically broken up into subsections.

The Progressive Era began in the 1890s and was marked by a period of social and political reform. A few years before its start, investigative female journalist Nellie Bly rose to an extraordinary level of influence, kick-starting the Progressive movement with her muckraking articles. Bly showed astonishing bravery by plunging herself into the midst of unethical situations in order to expose the injustices in America. She did this by pioneering stunt journalism, a method in which attention-grabbing articles reveal the author's personal perspective on societal problems. Bly was especially attuned to these issues because as a woman in the 1800s, she was subject to sexism and discrimination, especially in the workplace. Despite these barriers, Bly rose to a high level of influence, leading women by example to pursue previously inaccessible careers and be successful in them. Bly's own success allowed her articles to galvanize the population with messages of social ills and necessary reforms, which when carried out left a lasting impact in America. The concept of using journalism as a catalyst for social reform is one that is employed by modern day immersive journalists to continue the betterment of society.

Word Count: 493