In 1955, Dr. Jonas Salk created the first polio vaccine, which was a momentous occasion in the history of medicine and vaccination. Dr. Salk’s many years of scientific work, and his eventual creation of the polio vaccine, paved the way for the discovery of a significant amount of future vaccines and saved millions of lives. My first criteria for choosing a History Day topic was to pick someone that had done a great service to America first and foremost, but also to the whole world. I also planned on learning about someone new that I had never heard of. As I began googling different Americans throughout history I came across Dr. Jonas Salk and his polio vaccine. At first this surprised me because when I hear polio the first person that comes to mind in Louis Pasteur. As I dug into Dr. Salk’s story more, I realized that this was one of the most important and equally popular events of the 1950s. It was then that I decided I would like to do my project on him.

I first began searching the Seaman High School library database and looking at the history of polio. I discovered that it was one of the most frightening diseases of the 1940s and 50s because it specifically targeted children, which naturally put parents on high alert. When I went to the University of Kansas to find more information at their library I discovered about thirty different *New York Times* articles from the time period talking about the polio vaccine and how it was going to save America. There were also several articles directly questioning Dr. Salk about the process of creating his vaccine and his reaction to his newfound fame. I finalized my research at the Washburn Library, and there I found a lot out about Dr. Salk’s personal beliefs and about the Salk Institute of Biology that he created.

I’ve always enjoyed expressing my ideas through writing, but when I found out that I could enter my project as a website I choose it immediately. I believe that the ability to present my writing with the aide of pictures and videos will make for a much better story of Dr. Salk and the polio vaccine, and people will grasp my information better.

Dr. Jonas Salk is probably one of the greatest leaders in the field of medicine of all time because of his groundbreaking discovery of killed-virus vaccines, which also led to the complete destruction of polio in the United States, and most parts of the world. The legacy he has left is all around us today, as the use of vaccines has become common worldwide, and people do not have to fear about polio anymore. Furthermore, the Salk Institute has become a key tool in discovering cures and vaccines for diseases throughout the world today. All of this has come to work towards Dr. Salk’s mission of making the world a better place for all.