Process Paper

I decided to write my research paper on the Underground Railroad because I found it to be an interesting topic that had lots of information. It has many letters from the time period involving people attempting to gain freedom and other primary sources that fascinated me. We've also never discussed the Underground Railroad in depth at school, although it was an important and big event in our history, so I felt it was a useful thing to know about.

I began my research with many primary sources as well as multiple other books online that were downloadable. I started off with learning the basics of the Underground Railroad and then continued to go deeper in to how it functioned and was run. I then started studying the effects and the different sides of the people involved in it, the slave owners, the slaves themselves, and the abolitionists working to help get them to freedom. It was much easier to find the information I needed once I found many of my sources as hard copies. More recently I began focusing more on my question and searched for causes and reasons as to why and how the Underground Railroad led to the Civil War. The book that helped me with this part the most was *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom*. It discussed the buildup of the conflict between the north and south, and what events occurred right before the war that were major causes to its beginnning.

My thesis for the paper is the Underground Railroad is the major cause for the start of the Civil War because the use of it and beliefs revolving around it caused division between the north and south. I am aiming to prove how the Underground Railroad itself led to the start of the Civil War, as well as how events caused by the Underground Railroad contributed. I also want to explain how it was the cause of division between the north and south in our country and how the Union was created. The Underground Railroad was the beginning of the vision to make all people free actually become an action, and the Civil War finalized that belief. Everything that led to the war occurred because of the Underground Railroad and people's role in it, and I intend to explain why that is.

With my polished rough draft, I used my outline and my notes to develop an argument to answer my essential question, how the Underground Railroad led to the start of the Civil War. I had to research a little more about the Fugitive Slave Law, which I used my previous sources for. I tried to explain each of the causes of the Civil War and how the Underground Railroad was connected and tried to be clear and accurate.

For my final draft I changed my thesis statement slightly to include how the Fugitive Slave Act was one of the major causes of the Civil War as well as the Underground Railroad to be able to give more evidence and to better fit my content. I researched deeper in to the Fugitive Slave Act as well as the very beginning of the Civil War. I kept most of the main ideas from my polished draft but tried to go in to more detail and give more evidence, as well as add to my argument.