

As you've probably heard the adults around you say a lot recently, these are 'unprecedented' times. This is a moment in time that will be studied by future historians, in the same way that we study the Black Death and the Great Plague today. They will look for different sources of evidence to learn about this time and how it affected different groups of people.

Try out some of these activities to record what life was like during lockdown and to consider what the historians of the future might make of it all.

The world in pictures

Find six pictures which you think would tell a future historian a lot about the current situation. Try to choose a range that show how different groups of people were affected in different ways and in different parts of the world. Remember the phrase 'a picture paints a thousand words' ... choose wisely!

Coronavirus timeline

‘There are decades where nothing happens; and there are weeks where decades happen’.

Vladimir Lenin

Events developed extremely quickly in this period. Make a timeline of the first few months of the Coronavirus crisis to help a future historian understand what happened. Remember, you can't record everything, so try to choose the most significant events.

November/December 2019	
January 2020	
February 2020	
March 2020	
April 2020	

How did different countries respond to the crisis?

Experiences of the crisis varied a great deal in different countries and over time. Find three key facts about how each of the following countries responded to the Coronavirus pandemic. Think about:

- What lockdown restrictions did they put in place and when?
- How did they try to support their citizens?
- How well did their healthcare system cope?

China	UK
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
Germany	Belarus
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
India	Kenya
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

What did world leaders say?

In difficult times, one of the jobs of world leaders is to speak on behalf of their people, to explain what their government is doing, and to encourage their people to act in certain ways.

Find some examples of what the following world leaders have had to say about coronavirus and their people's attempts to fight it:

Boris Johnson (UK)	
Angela Merkel (Germany)	
Donald Trump (US)	
Dr Tedros Adhanom (Director General of the World Health Organisation)	

What did ordinary people say?

It is sometimes harder for historians to find out what 'ordinary people' (those not in positions of power) thought about an event at the time. What these people think, say and write can be harder to access, because it isn't recorded as frequently.

When future historians try to find out what ordinary people thought about the crisis, what sources will be available to them?

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How might they select from these sources to build an accurate picture of the crisis?

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Recording your own views, for the future

One way to ensure your views and experience of the crisis are represented and available to future historians is to write the down now!

One of the best sources of information we have about the Great Plague of 1665 is Samuel Pepy's diary. You can read extracts here: pepysdiary.com/diary/summary/1665/.

Record your own viewpoint of the 2020 pandemic by answering the following questions:

1. How long have you been in lockdown so far?
2. Can you remember your first thought when you heard that schools were closing? Were you thrilled? Concerned? Frightened? Why?
3. Have your feelings changed at all?
4. What about when you heard we were going into lockdown?
5. What do you miss most about normal life?
6. How has your family reacted to being in lockdown?
7. What are the biggest disadvantages, in your opinion?
8. Do you think lockdown will change us all? If so, how?
9. What do you think you will remember most about this moment in history?
10. What are you most looking forward to when things return to normal?

Stand-out statistics

Historians often use statistics to help them illustrate the ‘big picture’ of how an event affected people.

Using the following websites, record five stats that you think are particularly interesting or that demonstrate how the pandemic affected us.

- ourworldindata.org/coronavirus
- informationisbeautiful.net/visualizations/covid-19-coronavirus-infographic-datapack/
- statista.com/chartoftheday/Coronavirus/

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Can you think of any problems that future historians might have in interpreting these statistics?

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What long term changes might the crisis bring about?

Historic events tend to speed up change and change the way we do things. The First World War, for example, led to massive medical advances. The Second World War led to the establishment of the NHS.

How do you think the following areas might be affected by the pandemic in the longer term:

The environment

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The economy (Who will be the winners and losers?)

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Politics (Will people change what they believe about how countries should be run?)

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Inequality

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The position of women

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The provision of healthcare

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