

Students can create “primary sources” for future historians

There are so many unanswered questions right now, but the answer to that last question is yes. So consider a simple assignment in which your students jot down their thoughts, questions, concerns and observations about what is going on. I suggested that they could do this as a letter, a diary/journal entry or just write.

Here are a few suggestions to get them started:

your family’s trip to the grocery store and “stocking up”
cancelled family vacations, cancelled field trips, cancelled school
how weird it is to have to “e-learn”?
how are you occupying your time?
how do you feel about this? psyched that you don’t have to come to school? bored? worried?
bummed that you won’t get to see your friends?
what is changing for you because of this?
what kinds of things are your families thinking/saying/doing?
Or have them post short videos about what they are thinking. Flipgrid is great for this. One of my colleagues is posting a question each day for students to reflect on. I know I have enjoyed this glimpse into my students’ worlds, seeing the posters on the walls of their bedrooms, or their dog on the couch in the living room. You can come up with some fun questions to get the ball rolling:

What is your “must have” if you are going to be cooped up inside for awhile?

What are your “binge watch” recommendations?

Where is your new “desk”?

FocusLessons_Banner_HM

And then you can get into deeper questions, as long as you let students know that they don’t have to share anything they don’t wish to.

What is the #1 concern you have about what is going on right now?

What is a small way in which your life has changed right now?

What mattered to you a few days or a week ago that now seems irrelevant? Vice versa?

Things are changing very quickly now. This seems to be an assignment you could keep adapting as time passes. It doesn’t necessarily require the internet, should that availability become restricted in some way.

Remind your students that they are creating a primary source – documentation of what one student was thinking in March of 2020 during the global pandemic. Now we are all a part of history.

Stay well!

I would ask that parents ask their children to complete short reflections on their experience while at home. This can be done once a day, every few days, or whatever fits best in your family's experience during the school closure. It should also be an opportunity for mental stimulation during the downtime outside of school. I will include some "sentence starters" for your child to use if it would help. These reflections can take many forms:

- **A picture taken by the student or a screenshot of something they saw that day** either about the Coronavirus or of their experience being out of school because of this pandemic, with a brief description of their reaction. A student's phone can empower them to be amateur historians, adding to the historical record. This can be copied and pasted on a document and shared.
 - **A reaction to a news article or report** that made an impression on them that day. Please note the source of the report and basic outline of what was covered.
 - **A journal entry** containing their personal thoughts for the day.
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- Today I saw/heard _____ . It made me feel _____.
 - The time at home has been very different because _____. It made me realize _____.
 - When I was out of the house, I noticed _____, so I took a picture of it (attach picture to document). I feel it is important to be saved/remember this because _____.
 - I watched a news report/read an article about _____. It helped me understand _____.