

FROM SPANISH FLU TO COVID-19: WHAT CAN THE PAST TEACH US?

A UNIT in Three Lessons for Kindergarten & 1st Grade Classes

Unit Overview:

Students will learn that America has faced a pandemic before - in 1918. They will compare and contrast the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic with COVID-19 today. Students will learn about the purpose of an archive and record their own experiences with COVID-19 in a time-capsule. Students will have the opportunity to submit their time-capsule to be preserved in the archive of the Fresno County Historical Society.

Unit Summary:

COVID-19 is not the first time that our country has faced a pandemic. Just over 100-years-ago the Spanish Flu sickened over 105 million Americans and more than 500,000 people died. In Fresno County Halloween was canceled, schools were closed and masks were mandatory. Thanks to the many historical lessons about the Spanish Flu during and after 1918 the country was able to respond today's pandemic with many of the solutions learned then.

This unit will teach students about the history of the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918. Students will learn about how Fresno County responded to the pandemic and compare and contrast the government and local responses from 100 years ago to the responses of COVID-19 today. Students will also learn about the purpose and value of a historical archive and about information and experiences collected for preservation from ordinary citizens just like them. Students will understand that Fresno County has its own archive at the Fresno County Historical Society. The unit will culminate with each student recording their own personal COVID-19 experience by completing the *My 2020 COVID-19 Time-Capsule*. Each time-capsule will be submitted to the Fresno County Historical Society's archive where it will be preserved for future generations

Time Allotment:

Taught in three 30-40 minute lessons.

Grade Level: K-1

Standards

History-Social Science Content Standards

Chronological and Spatial Thinking

1. Students explain how major events are related to one another in time.

Research, Evidence, and Point of View

1. Students frame questions that can be answered by historical study and research.
2. Students distinguish fact from opinion in historical narratives and stories.
3. Students detect the different historical points of view on historical events and determine the context in which the historical statements were made (the questions asked, sources used, author's perspectives).

Historical Interpretation

1. Students explain the central issues and problems from the past, placing people and events in a matrix of time and place.
2. Students understand and distinguish cause, effect, sequence, and correlation in historical events, including the long-and short-term causal relations.
3. Students explain the sources of historical continuity and how the combination of ideas and events explains the emergence of new patterns.
4. Students recognize the role of chance, oversight, and error in history.
5. Students recognize that interpretations of history are subject to change as new information is uncovered.

Writing Standards K-5

1. Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.
5. With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed
6. With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.

Reading Standards for Literature K-5

1. Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
3. Describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text.
7. Use the illustrations and details in a text to describe its key ideas.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

Define what an Archive is and identify the type of material that is housed in an Archive.

Describe the Spanish Flu Pandemic and relate it to what is happening with COVID-19 today.

Record and Share their own personal experience with COVID-19 and how it has affected them and their families.

Materials

Photographs:

Pop Laval, Armistices Day Parade, Fresno, November 1918

National Archives photo collection from digital exhibit on Spanish Flu

Public Health Notices:

US Dept. of Treasury's Public Health Service Flyer on Influenza, 1918

California Board of Health "How to Make a Mask" instructions, 1919

Fresno County Department of Public Health COVID-19 Infographic, 2020

CDC Infographic on mask wearing, 2020

Workbook:

My 2020 COVID-19 Time Capsule

Web Resources:

What's an Archives?

<https://www.archives.gov/about/info/whats-an-archives.html>

National Archives News - The Flue Pandemic of 1918

<https://www.archives.gov/news/topics/flu-pandemic-1918#:~:text=Before%20COVID%2D19%2C%20the%20most,deaths%20in%20World%20War%20I>)

Lesson Activity #1: Defining an Archive

Set-up: Ask students where they store all their toys or favorite things. Do they have a baby book or photo album with pictures of their families or loved ones? Why do we store our favorite items in special places? What is special item would you store in an Archive? Describe your favorite item.
Read to the students excerpts from: What's an Archive? from [National Archives website](#) (see Web Resources) to explain to the students the purpose and value of an archive.

An archive is a place where people can go to gather firsthand facts, data, and evidence from letters, reports, notes, memos, photographs, and other primary sources.

Whether or not you realize it, you probably have an archive in your home. It might be in a filing cabinet in your study, a box in the basement, a chest in the attic. It is your personal archive: a collection of material that records important events from your family's history.

There are ways that your family archives tell your family's story.

Tell the students that their experience during the COVID-19 pandemic is important to preserve so future generations can learn from the past. At the end of this lesson, they will create their own time-capsule to archive their experience during COVID-19.

Learning Activity #2: Reviewing history - Photos from the 1918 Spanish Flu

Class discussion: Show students the photo album of images from the National Archives digital exhibit on the 1918 Spanish Flu. As you place each picture on the screen ask the students to share what they see in the picture. Ask them if the picture is familiar to them. (example: Lets look at this mail man, he is wearing a mask. Have you seen a mail man wearing a mask recently?)

Once you have discussed all 5 pictures and made connections with the people and images that students have seen in the present day. Share with them that these pictures were taken over 100 years ago. Share with students that in 1918 there was a sickness much like COVID-19 called the Spanish Flu and that these pictures are from that time.

Tell the students that their experience during the COVID-19 pandemic is important to preserve so future generations can learn from the past.

Class discussion: Talk with the students about how we are wearing masks when we go outside right now. Ask the students if they think we got the idea to wear masks from what we learned over 100 years ago during the Spanish Flu. Ask them if they think that they have learned anything that might be important for people to know 100 years from now about what they are learning during COVID-19.

Learning Activity #3: My COVID-19 Time Capsule Project

Set-up: Introduce the My COVID-19 project by reading the following:

We have our own place that keeps archives of Fresno's history. The Fresno County Historical Society preserves local history to share for future generations. They are collecting items and stories to about the COVID-19 pandemic in Fresno. Your help is needed.

Explain to the students that the following assignments will be collected to capture their live experience during COVID-19. These assignments will be placed in a time-capsule with the Fresno County Historical Society for future generations to learn from this critical event.

Have students complete as many the My COVID-19 Time Capsule assignments below as you choose:

- You are living through history right now
- All about me
- How I'm feeling
- My community
- What am I doing to keep busy
- Our handprints
- Special occasions
- Letter to myself
- Interview your parents
- Letter from your parents

Collect all documents and items from each student for submission to the Fresno County Historical Society's archive as part of the COVID-19 collection.

Printed materials can be mailed to:
Fresno County Historical Society
COVID-19 Collection
PO Box 11336
Fresno, CA 93772

Digital Materials can be emailed to: info@valleyhistory.org (subject line: FUSD COVID-19 Collection)

Assessment

Use the following questions to guide a recap discussion, as a quiz, or a guideline for a quick drawing assignment.

Lesson Activity #1: Defining an Archive

Recap discussion: Ask students, what is an archive? What type of things are placed in an archive? Why do we store items in an archive? How does an archive help people learn?

Learning Activity #2: What did we learn from the Spanish Flu Pandemic of 1918

Quick drawing: Have each student draw a picture of something that is similar from the 1918 Flu compared to COVID-19 today (i.e. social distancing, mask wearing, hand washing, etc.).

Learning Activity #3: My COVID-19 Time-Capsule Project

Recap discussion: Have each student select one assignment from their My 2020 COVID-19 Time Capsule to share and present to the class.

Extension Activity

Learning Activity #1:

Quick drawing: Share with students the public health notices from 1918 and 2020 concerning masks and other healthy behaviors to prevent spreading the flu. Have each student draw their own public health notice to promote health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. (i.e. social distancing, mask wearing, hand washing, etc.)