

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

A UNIT in Three Lessons for 2nd & 3rd 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 to 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 40-50 minute lessons.

Grade Level: 2-3

Standards

History-Social Science Content Standards

Chronological and Spatial Thinking

1. Students place key events and people of the historical era they are studying in a chronological sequence and within a spatial context; they interpret timelines.
2. Students correctly apply terms related to time, including *past, present, future, decade, century, and generation*.
3. Students explain how the present is connected to the past, identifying both similarities and differences between the two, and how some things change over time and some things stay the same.

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Research, Evidence, and Point of View

1. Students differentiate between primary and secondary sources.
2. Students pose relevant questions about events they encounter in historical documents, eyewitness accounts, oral histories, letters, diaries, artifacts, photographs, maps, artworks, and architecture.
3. Students distinguish fact from fiction by comparing documentary sources on historical figures and events with fictionalized characters and events.

Historical Interpretation

1. Students summarize the key events of the era they are studying and explain the historical contexts of those events.
2. Students identify the human and physical characteristics of the places they are studying and explain how those features form the unique character of those places.
3. Students identify and interpret the multiple causes and effects of historical events.
4. Students conduct cost-benefit analyses of historical and current events.

Reading: Informational Text 3rd Grade

1. Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
3. Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.
7. Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

Writing Standards 3rd Grade

2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
5. With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grade 3.)
6. With guidance and support from adults, use technology to produce and publish writing (using keyboarding skills) as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- **Define** what an archive is used for and understand how it influences society.
- **Describe** how COVID-19 is connected to the Spanish Flu Pandemic, identifying similarities and differences between the two, and identifying what has changed over time.
- **Record and Share** their own personal experience with COVID-19 and how it has affected them and their families.

Materials

Newspaper Articles:

Fresno Morning Republican, October 1918

Fresno Weekly Republican, January 1919

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

Video:

https://video.wixstatic.com/video/50b680_a8379a5f5755430791e544af8b3b7c2f/1080p/mp4/file.mp4

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

[1918#:~:text=Before%20COVID%2D19%2C%20the%20most,deaths%20in%20World%20War%20I\)](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: Explain to the students the significance of saving important documents and items from the past.

Read to the students the definition of an archive from Merriam Webster Dictionary:

Definition of *archive*

- 1: a place in which public records or historical materials (such as documents) are preserved
also : the material preserved —often used in plural reading through the archives
- 2: a repository or collection especially of information

Use the What's an Archives? 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.

The National Archives is the U.S. Government's collection of documents that records important events in American history. The National Archives and Records Administration is the Government agency that preserves and maintains these materials and makes them available for research.

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 archives: a collection of material that records important events from your family's history.

Both a family's archives and the nation's archives save items to serve as proof that an event occurred; explain how something happened, whether for personal, financial, or sentimental reasons; may be located in more than one place.

There are ways that your family archives and the National Archives, together, tell your family's story. For example, your family's archives might contain the final certificate for your great-great-grandfather's homestead; the National Archives may hold the original applications for the homestead. Your family's archives may include a photograph from the day your grandmother became a U.S. citizen; the National Archives contains the Government applications for naturalization of persons wishing to become U.S. citizens.

Class discussion: Ask the students what items they can think of that they would place in their own personal archive? Discuss the items, why they were chosen, and what type of value it has for the student.

Learning Activity #2: Video Reflection - What did we learn from the Spanish Flu of 1918

Explain to students that Fresno County has its own archive maintained by the Fresno County Historical Society. Read to the students the introduction of the Fresno County Historical Society from its [website valleyhistory.org](http://website.valleyhistory.org):

For over 100 years, the Fresno County Historical Society has worked to bring life to the heritage of our region by collecting, preserving, interpreting and holding in public trust the records and artifacts that document the people of Fresno County and the Central Valley of California.

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

Have students watch the video (10 minutes): *Valley PBS Special: COVID-19 and the Central Valley, A Community Conversation (featuring Elizabeth Laval, President of the Fresno County Historical Society).*

Class discussion: How did the Spanish Flu impact/change peoples' daily lives? What lessons did we learn from the past pandemic? Discuss the benefits of learning from the past and how it has helped us during this current flu pandemic.

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

Set-up: Read to students the introduction of My COVID-19 Experience website:

Part of the mission of the Fresno County Historical Society is to preserve local history as it happens for the generations yet to come. The Historical Society is actively gathering materials and stories to document the COVID-19 pandemic in Fresno County. This will help to capture the full impact of the crisis to be understood in the future. 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 the My COVID-19 Time-Capsule and complete the following assignments in the workbook:

- 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 writing assignment.

Lesson Activity #1: Defining an Archive

Quick write: Have each student define an “archive” in their own words. Require them to write about three items that they would place in their own personal archive and explain why. Have students explain how archiving will benefit future generations.

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

Quick write: Have students write a response to the following questions: How did the 1918 Spanish Flu impact/change peoples' daily lives? How had COVID 19 changed peoples' daily lives. What lessons did we learn from the 1918 Spanish Flu?

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

Recap discussion: Have each student select two assignments 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.)

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

Video recap: Re-watch the *Valley PBS Special: COVID-19 and the Central Valley, A Community Conversation* video. Then have each student split a lined piece of paper into two columns. Ask them to write one header with 1918 Spanish Flu and the other header 2020 COVID-19. As a class ask them to list the similarities and differences between the two events.

Distance Learning Options

- Assign the readings and require two group discussions before presenting.
- Hold discussions via video conferencing software like Zoom, or chat service like Discord.

- Alternatively, require students to contribute to an online discussion board 1-2 times per week.
- Hold live stream or video presentations in which each student is required to fill 1 minute of time.
- Each group share out to class to ensure all students comprehend the content.
- Assign a short reflection essay.