



Pandemic Choices: How Will School Reopen?

By: Jessica Shaffer

5th grade teacher; M.A. in Administration and Leadership, Georgian Court University, NJ

History
Grades 6-8



Introduction

It is not everyday that you get to live through a piece of history that makes it into the books. The COVID-19 pandemic will be studied for many years to come in history classes. You must put yourself in the governor's shoes and make the very tough decision on how learning will start the next school year. You must weigh all the options, the positives and the negatives of each scenario, and create an essay that illustrates your decision on how to reopen schools in the fall.

Learning Objectives

WALT use the writing process to create an essay about the reopening of schools after a pandemic.

- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.2](#)
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.2.A](#)
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.2.B](#)

Materials Needed

- [Pre-writing graphic organizer](#)
- [Writer's checklist](#)
- Additional activities
- Chromebook/tablet/computer

Procedure

1. Have a class discussion about the COVID-19 pandemic and how it has affected the students' lives.
2. Watch videos and read articles. Make sure to preview all before assigning as websites and contents change frequently. Make sure the information is appropriate for the grade level you are teaching.
 - [BrainPOP: Coronavirus](#)
 - [Coronavirus: Related Reading](#)
 - [BrainPOP: Flattening the Curve](#)
 - [Flattening the Curve: Related Reading](#)
 - [Scholastic News: Coronavirus Questions](#)

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- [Kid's Guide to Coronavirus](#)
- [National Geographic: Facts about Coronavirus](#)
- [Cincinnati Children's Coronavirus Videos](#)
- [Coronavirus Video for Kids](#)
- [CDC: How to Talk to Kids about Coronavirus](#)
- [CDC: Covid-19 Videos](#)

3. Have students fill in a graphic organizer to organize ideas and determine how to reopen schools.
4. Have students begin to create their essays. The first part will be the introduction. In the introduction, students should include:
 - The introduction should “hook” or grab the attention of the reader
 - The main idea of the essay
 - State the thesis
 - State the points to support the thesis statement
5. Have students create the body of their essays. There should be at least three paragraphs of supporting details.
 - These should all be statements that “back-up” the student’s main idea statement in the introduction. The supporting details should always relate back to the main idea of the essay.
 - Include a topic sentence in each paragraph.
 - Different types of supporting details:
 - Include data and statistics if possible
 - Use real-life examples
 - Use your own experiences or observations
 - Use facts
 - Use opinions
6. Have students create the conclusion for their essay.
 - Have a topic sentence that summarizes what was said in the thesis statement. Do not just restate the thesis.
 - Move from more specific to more general throughout the paragraph (the opposite of the introduction).
 - You should summarize the topic sentence for each of your supporting detail paragraphs in the conclusion.

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- Do not bring up new ideas.
 - Have a strong last sentence, or “clincher”, in the essay. This is what will leave a lasting impression on the readers.
7. Teachers will conference with students as they create their writing piece. Students will be given a checklist that they must have teacher initial when their writing has been checked. This will be done throughout the writing process for the essay. (This can be modified. If the teacher chooses, students can just complete the checklist on their own and initial it with his/her own initials. If teachers do not wish to conference with the students, the teacher can instead monitor the work being completed and help on an as-needed basis.)
 8. When the rough draft of the essay is completed, students should have two peers edit the essay and make the appropriate changes before handing in the revised rough draft to the teacher for a final edit. (This can also be modified. If the teacher does not wish to revise the essays for the students, they may edit the checklist.)
 9. Students will make the final edits and create the final draft of their essay.

Assignment: The teacher should have two assignments/activities that correlate with learning about COVID-19 or pandemics. The assignments are valuable because they could give students ideas for writing, but also expand their knowledge on a major part of (future) history that they are living through.

Evaluation

You should use the writing rubric that your district requires to grade the writing.