

CURRENT EVENTS CONVERSATION

Students Describe Their Pandemic Experience in Six-Word Memoirs

Wake up, get on Zoom, repeat.

By The Learning Network

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Illustration by Nicholas Konrad

This post is part of The Learning Network's weekly Current Events Conversation feature, in which we publish a selection of notable student comments on our daily writing prompts.

How would you describe pandemic life ... in just six words?

Inspired by "The Pandemic in Six-Word Memoirs," an Opinion piece by Larry Smith, the creator of Six-Word Memoirs, we challenged students to capture their experiences over the last 19 months in their own six-word stories.

We asked them: What comes to mind when you think about the last year, or even the 19 months since quarantines first began? What small details of your life seem especially interesting, poignant, funny or relatable?



Cindy Lozito

Teenagers rose to the occasion with pandemic memoirs that brought humor, introspection and deep feeling to this moment. While short, these miniature stories convey much bigger ideas about online school, being trapped inside, missing friends, the political landscape, the “longest two weeks ever,” personal growth and hope.

Thank you to all those who participated in this exercise this week, including teenagers from **Layton, Utah; Riverside University High School in Milwaukee; and Pittsburgh.**

Please note: Student comments have been lightly edited for length and clarity.



Cindy Lozito

“Congratulations on graduating!” *closes Chromebook*

— Jack, Hoggard High School

Dusty backpacks, my life on pause.

— Charlotte, J.R. Masterman

I love sleeping. Not this much!

— Reece, Hoggard High School

Don't cough. It scares people now.

— Vay, Utah

Day 582 of two-week masking.

— Will, Illinois

Glazed donuts, glazed eyes, glazed life.

— Cassidy, Hoggard High School

Google search: How to survive apocalypse?

— La, NUAMES High School

Day three: I need more shows.

— Terrell, J.R. Masterman

Sounds fun, but what about Covid?

— Alexandra, J.R. Masterman

Sleep and procrastination: my closest friends.

— Nicole, Cary High School

Technology. An escape, but not education.

— Gwyneth, Kempner High School

Eyes open, but never really awake.

— Kara, J.R. Masterman

Close with family, far from friends.

— Shalom, Houston

48th time I've seen this video.

— Jonathan, J.R. Masterman

every day is the same day
— Hsamu, Milwaukee, Wis.

Wake up, get on Zoom, repeat.
— Jack, GB

Depressed. Stressed. What is coming next?! —
Taisen, Pittsburgh

Together now, but still all alone.
— Sophie, Union High School

netflix, missing assignments, doordash, sleep deprived
— Joah, Glenbrook North

Productiveness overcomes bad feelings and thoughts.
— Manar, Kempner High School

Sleeping, eating, strolling. Nothing to do.
— Jasmine, Riverside University High School

Trapped inside, empty streets, empty me.

— Klajdi, J.R. Masterman

Tired of being in my room.

— Valeria, New Mexico

TikTok, YouTube, Netflix; mind goes numb.

— Maya, NUAMES High School

I'm six feet away from normal.

— Abbey, J.R. Masterman

Learned how to smile without smiling.

— Gabriel, Northbrook

Watching history being made; it's bad.

— Payton, Illinois

Political polarity, ravaging 'rona, deliberate deceit

— Caden, Utah

“In this together,” says comfortable billionaire.

— Mya, NUAMES High School



Cindy Lozito

Covid danger zones: parks and schools.

— Chris, Hoggard High School

Spent 10 minutes picking out mask.

— Lillian, Hoggard High School

Birthday ruined, schedule ruined, trust ruined.

— Garrison, J.R. Masterman

“Covid is a hoax,” they said.

— Jackson, Layton, Utah

a long, harsh, challenging, roller coaster

— Hyan, Atrisco Heritage Academy High School

if we could flick a wand

— Zebo, J.R. Masterman

Quit old habits, to heal inward.
— Da’Jah, City High Charter School

I caught Covid; I’m better now.
— Micaela, J.R. Masterman

Clenched jaws underneath disposable masks.
— Pragati, Farmington High School

Offline, online, offline ... Present? Not really.
— Celia, Cary High School

Lacking sleep, lacking emotion, lacking connection.
— Lorenzo, TNCS, Richmond, Va.

Trapped in my head, no escape.
— Claire, J.R. Masterman

Lonely, but content; I grew tremendously.
— Haven, Kempner High School



everyday is yesterday, my new life
— Christopher, J.R. Masterman

Empty town, empty wallet, empty mind.
— Ed, Mass.

My home soon became a chrysalis.
— Sofia, California

Physical seclusion resulted in lonesome ideation.
— Darlene, Kempner High School

Fail my classes. Eat Doritos. Repeat.
— Dylan, Hoggard High School

A different person emerged from quarantine.
— Tracy, Kempner High School

Lost my mask, need another one.
— Jonah, J.R. Masterman

Friends? No, just games and screens.
— Michael, City High, Pittsburgh

The vaccine works, please get it.
— Eoin, J.R. Masterman

Depressed. Stressed. What is coming next?!

— Taisen, Pittsburgh

I need to see the world.

— Vrishab, J.R. Masterman

Time for reflection, time to question.

— Gabrielle, Connecticut

Loneliness, anxiety, fear. Oh look, hope.

— Audrey, Miami Country Day School

Learn more about Current Events Conversation here and find all of our posts in this column.