

### **Elementary (K-5) Mini-Unit**

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Support Provided by the Ganek Family Mini-Grant for Innovation in Education

**Introduction:** Thank you for thinking about students' emotional learning in the time of the pandemic. *In America: Remember* aims to recognize American's grief and loss as a result of the pandemic. This lesson, including educational materials and resources, was designed for you to achieve the following goals: 1) to support elementary students' social and emotional development, 2) to strengthen elementary students' connection to U.S. history, and 3) to promote the use of art to participate in our communities. Links to all materials, resources, and alignment to Common Core State Standards are provided below.

**\*Note:** You may have children in your class who experienced deep grief and loss throughout the pandemic. Their experience is vastly different. Please be sensitive to those children's needs and seek support from experts at your school. Furthermore, some children may have experienced an earlier loss and are also at risk of being triggered by this conversation, as current discussions of loss can often harken back to earlier experiences. It's important to be mindful and considerate of these children as well. Do not force a child to talk about a death or a traumatic experience if they don't want to. This may be more harmful than helpful ([National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#)).

#### **Objective:**

Foster ways for students to interact with and express themselves through *In America: Remember*, an art exhibition commemorating the lives lost from the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Recommended Time: 90 minutes (Mini-unit)**

#### **Vocabulary:**

- [Coronavirus](#)
- [COVID-19](#)
- [Pandemic](#)
- [Quarantine](#)
- [Vaccine](#)
- [Empathy](#)
- [Grief](#)

#### **Materials Needed:**

- Chart paper

- Markers
- Embedded links
- Sticky notes (optional)
- [Outside, Inside](#) by LeUyen Pham (optional)
  - Pham, L. (2021). *Outside, Inside*. Roaring Brook Press: New York.
- Picture supports: [Google Slides](#) (optional)
- Printed copies of examples of art (optional)

### **Aligned Standards:**

- [Social and Emotional Learning](#)
  - Standard 1: Self-awareness
  - Standard 4: Social awareness
  - Standard 6: Social engagement
- [English Language Arts: CCSS. CCRA](#)
  - **Speaking and Listening:**
    - **Comprehension and Collaboration**
      - 1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
      - 2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
    - **Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas**
      - 5. Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.
  - **Language:**
    - **Vocabulary Acquisition and Use**
      - 4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate
  - **Reading:**
    - **Integration of Knowledge and Ideas**
      - 7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
- [Next Generation Science Standards](#)
  - [K-ESS-3](#) Earth and Human Activity
  - [3-LS1-1](#) From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes

### **1. Building Background: "What is the COVID-19 Pandemic?"**

Use a [Think, Pair, Share](#) instructional strategy to activate students' prior knowledge. Show photos or display actual artifacts from the pandemic that could include masks, social distancing signs, the photo of the cells, vaccination cards, etc. ([See Slide 2](#)) Pose a question and provide time for students to think about their ideas. Then, have students turn to a partner and share their thinking.

\*Note: Listen in while the students talk because it will support your decisions to include the most relevant and appropriate pieces of this lesson.

*“What are these items?”*

*“What do they make you think about?”*

*“What do you know and/or remember about COVID-19 and the pandemic?”*

**After students have had time to share with their partner, ask several pairs to share their thoughts with the whole group. Visually display any new words that students will need to use throughout the lesson.**

**Based on students’ age, background knowledge, and prior experiences, you might use the infographic [“What is the Coronavirus?”](#) or the videos linked below to lead a discussion about origin of the virus; how the virus is spread; and how we can protect ourselves against the virus by masking, social distancing, and handwashing.**

[All about Coronavirus: A Video for Kids and Their Families | Michigan Public Health](#)

(2:32)

[Coronavirus: How to Teach Kids About COVID-19 | BrainPOP](#) (4:32)

[What is the coronavirus? Prevention and Advice for Kids - COVID-19](#)

*“Why is it important to stop the spread of COVID-19?”*

*“What are some of the ways to stop the spread of Coronavirus?”*

*“Why or how does that way (of stopping the spread) work?”*

*“What do you think would happen if we all stopped taking these preventative measures?”*

**Tell students that scientists worked quickly to create a vaccine with the goal of protecting people from getting and spreading COVID-19.**

*“Vaccines are one way to help stop the spread of a disease. A vaccine helps our bodies create an immunity, or defense, against the disease”*

*“How are vaccines connected to stopping the spread of the Coronavirus?”*

**If student interest leads to discussion on vaccines and how they work, follow their lead. Here are some video resources to share with the students if needed:**

[Immunity and Vaccines Explained, a NOVA PBS animation](#)

[Animated video explains how COVID vaccine works in your body](#)

[How do vaccines work? \(World Health Organization\)](#)

## **2. [The impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic \(on self, others, community, nation, world\)](#)**

**Pose the following question and record student responses. Mark the personal ways with a “P”.**

*“What are some examples of ways that your life has changed because of the COVID-19 Pandemic?”*

While writing, ask students to identify which of those personal ways were also community-level impacts (school, masks, etc.) Mark them with a “C” for community. Then, code the impact on the world with “W”.

*“Does this way also impact the community or the world? If so, how?”*

Transition the discussion to the impact of the virus more broadly.

*“As we discussed, there are many ways to stop spreading the virus, however, sadly, many people are still losing their lives due to the virus.”*

If age-appropriate, choose to share one of the [dynamic resources](#) to show the [current number of deaths](#) from the COVID-19 virus.

*“What information does this show us?”*

*“What can you infer from this data?”*

Share that almost every person on the planet was affected by the pandemic in one way or another. Play [“Ask An Expert”](#) interview with Dr. Ashton Verdery, an Associate Professor of Sociology & Demography at Penn State, who has studied the bereavement burden of COVID-19 in the US. Pose the following questions after watching the video:

*“What does Dr. Verdery study?”*

*“What is bereavement? Why is this important?”*

*“What are some ways that Dr. Verdery suggests supporting those who have lost a friend or family member to COVID-19?”*

*“Why do you think it might be helpful to talk about our feelings with a trusted adult?”*

You may ask students to write one or more questions they would like to ask an expert about the COVID-19 pandemic on a sticky note. These sticky notes can be collected and used in follow-up lessons or research and writing activities.

**Literature Connection:** The picture book, *Outside, Inside* (Pham, 2021), tells how communities came together to face the challenges of the pandemic, while celebrating essential workers.

Read the book aloud or watch the [video](#) of the author, LeUyen Pham, talking about how and why she wrote her book and reading her book aloud. The read aloud starts at timestamp 6:21 and ends at 10:20.

If using the video or reading the book aloud, it is recommended to stop throughout and ask the students about how they feel and what they are noticing in the illustrations.

*“How did this book make you feel?”*

*“In what ways did this book make you feel thankful for others?”*

*“What did the illustrations tell us about how people are reacting to the pandemic?”*

*“What examples can you find in the book that show how things changed inside and outside?”*

*“How might our lives have been different if front-line workers had stayed home?”*

*“What does the author mean when she writes, ‘But on the inside we are all the same’?”*

Return to the chart of student responses to ask questions about how life changed for others. Record student responses.

*“What are some ways the lives of others changed because of the COVID-19 pandemic?”*

### 3. Personal and collective feelings about the COVID-19 Pandemic

Ask students to consider their emotional response to the pandemic. Based on student need, you might display a chart that describes various emotions to support students in describing how they are feeling ([See Slide 3](#)). You might want to provide [sentence frames](#) to provide language support, such as “I felt \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_.” To encourage thinking about their feelings, refer back to their responses on the chart showing the impacts of the pandemic on their lives.

It is helpful to remember this is a sensitive topic for many, so be sure to provide wait-time for students to think about their response before sharing with a partner.

**\*Note:** Some children will not be able to recall their emotions from their experience due to age, development, or time passing. It may be helpful to share some of your own feelings at this time.

*“What were some feelings or emotions you are feeling because of the COVID-19 Pandemic?”*

*“Can you identify the feelings and what might have caused them?”*

*“How did you feel about not seeing your family members or friends for all that time?”*

Tell students that feelings are neither right nor wrong. Different people have different feelings. Feelings come and go. It’s natural to have multiple feelings at the same time.

*“You might be scared sometimes, sad sometimes, happy sometimes, maybe all in the same day.”*

*“You might feel very sad about someone getting COVID-19, happy your family is safe right now, scared someone you love might get sick.”*

Remind students that almost every person on the whole planet was affected by the pandemic in one way or another. Ask students to put themselves in the place of others and think about how they would feel in certain situations.

*“How would you feel if you needed to go to work at the grocery store?”*

*“How do you think the doctors in the hospital feel? Why might that be true?”*

Remind students that *feeling with others* is called “empathy”. Provide students with a [set of emotions cards](#). Prompt students to select the card that displays the emotion they imagine someone in that situation would feel and share their choice and reasoning with a partner. Include a blank card for students to identify an emotion not listed on the cards. Ask students to explain why they chose the emotion.

*“Empathy is feeling with others.”*

*“Which emotion card do you think best shows how a doctor/grocery store worker/grandparent feels about the pandemic quarantine? Why might they feel that way?”*

**Explain that there are many ways for people to share emotions. Recognizing and sharing feelings is an important part of growing up. Ask students why and how they talk about their feelings.**

*“Why is it important to recognize and talk about our feelings?”*

**Even very strong, persistent feelings like grief get easier over time. It’s helpful to have ways to comfort ourselves or distract ourselves from them. But letting ourselves experience those feelings helps us get better over time. Art is one way to help ourselves feel.**

*“Often we talk about how we feel. We can show how we feel with our faces and bodies.”*

*“Another way to show how we feel is to create art to show feelings.”*

#### **4. Art’s powerful ability to help us understand and communicate our feelings**

**Tell the students they will experience a few pieces of art in various forms. Play a short segment of this upbeat [music](#) to evoke students’ feelings. You may want to invite the students to move their bodies in a way that expresses the emotions they feel when listening to the music. You might also play a short clip of this calm [music](#). Ask students to describe the emotions they feel while listening. Explain that choreographers, dancers, and musicians are artists who express their emotions through movement and music. Remind the students that LeUyen Pham, the author of *Inside, Outside*, wrote and illustrated a children’s book as a way to express her feelings during the pandemic.**

*“What emotions do you feel when you hear this music?”*

*“What aspects of the music make you feel that way?”*

*“How can you move to show your feelings to the music?”*

**Using the discussion technique of a [Gallery Walk](#), display several examples of art that were created to evoke strong emotion around the classroom ([See Slides 4-8](#)). Assign small groups of students to view one of the art examples. Each group should start at a different station. At each art example, students will discuss and record on the chart paper (1) what they noticed about the art and (2) their emotional reaction to the artwork.**

*“What do you notice about this art?”*

*“What emotions do you feel when you experience this piece of art?”*

*“What aspects of the artwork make you feel that way?”*

*“Record your feelings on the chart paper next to the art.”*

**Direct the groups to rotate to the next piece of art. If time allows, rotate again. Collectively, discuss the responses to the art.**

*“What feelings did we have in common?”*

*“How did the artwork prompt this feeling?”*

*“How would you portray that feeling?”*

Tell students that there was a feeling that has overwhelmed the whole world, called *grief*. Ask the students what they know about the concept of grief. Facilitate an interactive discussion about grief. If needed, use Mental Health America's [mental health resource](#) for support on facilitating this topic.

*“What is grief?”*

*“How does grief feel?”*

*“What are some ways we can take care of ourselves when we experience grief?”*

*“How do we care for others who are experiencing grief?”*

*“How does experiencing “collective grief” impact our feelings?”*

## 5. Learning through our interaction with the [In America: Remember Art Exhibition](#)

Share with the students that there is an art exhibition in Washington DC to honor and remember the lives lost due to the COVID-19 virus.

*“One artist wanted to create art that represented the collective grief our nation has felt through the COVID-19 pandemic. Let’s hear from the artist about what her art is and why she created it.”*

Play [Suzanne Brennan Firstenberg’s short video](#) to hear about why and how she created this art.

*“Why did Ms. Firstenberg create the flag art installation?”*

*“Ms. Firstenberg says she’s a visual artist. What is a visual artist?”*

*“What does each flag represent?”*

*“Why did Ms. Firstenberg decide to use flags for her art?”*

*“What is one important message Ms. Firstenberg wants to convey through her art?”*

Take time to look at the [In America: Remember](#) website. Review photos of the Art Exhibit and explore the website’s features and interactive nature. Show how families can “dedicate a flag” to memorialize or remember their lost loved one through participation in the exhibit.

*“How does this art make you feel?”*

*“How does this art help us feel together?”*

*“What does this art mean to you?”*

*“What could you imagine this art feels like to others?”*

*“How does this art help memorialize individuals or communities?”*

## 6. Artistic Reflections- [The Pandemic Through My Eyes: Art from the Next Generation](#)

Ask students for their ideas and thoughts. Do they have any other questions?

Remind students they are all artists and can express their emotions through art.

*“How can you use art to portray the impact of COVID-19 on you or your community?”*

*“How can you use art to bring attention to or amplify an important issue?”*

*“How can you use art to inspire others?”*

*“How can you use art to change the world?”*

Offer students an opportunity to participate in [\*The Pandemic Through My Eyes: Art from the Next Generation\*](#), an art project for students to express their emotions, thoughts, and ideas about the pandemic. Invite students to create art to reflect and share diverse ideas and voices in response to the exhibit. Students can create music, poetry, drawings, sculpture, or any other form of art to express feelings. Sharing the art with the class can help create a sense of collective grief, and ultimately healing. We also encourage sharing the art with your community.

Artwork will be showcased, without identifiers, on [\*The Pandemic Through My Eyes: Art From The Next Generation map\*](#).