

Secondary (6-12) Lesson

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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 secondary students' social and emotional development, 2) to strengthen secondary 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: 30 minutes

Vocabulary:

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

Materials Needed:

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Embedded links
- 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 & History/Social Studies: 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**
 - 4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
 - 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**
 - 6. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.
 - **Reading:**
 - **Key Ideas and Details**
 - 1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
 - 2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
 - **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.
 - **Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity**
 - 10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

1. Building Background: “What is the COVID19 Pandemic?”

Use a [Quick Write](#) to activate students’ prior knowledge. Ask students to think about what they know about the COVID-19 pandemic ([Slides 2-3](#)). Provide 2-3 minutes for students to write down their thoughts. Then, have students turn to a partner and share their thinking.

***Note:** For this sensitive topic, it’s important for teachers to keep a neutral and accepting stance. This conversation may trigger strong feelings and reactions from your students. If needed, use Mental Health America’s [mental health resource](#) for support on facilitating this topic.

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

“Jot down everything you know 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. Document students’ contributions.

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 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 at the national level with “N” and the impact on the world with “W”.

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

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

“There are many ways this virus is impacting us, our community, and the world.”

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

Ask the students to return to their Quick Write to document all the feelings or expressive words associated with *COVID-19 and the pandemic*.

“When you think about COVID-19 and the pandemic, what feelings do you have?”

“Jot down all the feelings you are feeling as a result of the pandemic.”

Tell students feelings are neither right nor wrong. Different people have different feelings. Feelings come and go. We can have multiple feelings at the same time.

You may choose to use visuals or real objects to support multiple language learners throughout the lesson. Display new or challenging vocabulary terms on a word wall. You might want to provide [sentence frames](#) to provide language support, such as “When I think about _____, it makes me feel _____ because _____.” ([See Slide 4](#))

Encourage students to consider their personal reactions and emotions as well as others who are experiencing the pandemic differently. Remind students that *feeling with others* is called “empathy”.

Explain that there are many ways for people to share emotions. Recognizing and sharing our feelings are an important part of growing up. Even very strong, persistent feelings (like grief) get easier over time. It’s helpful to have ways to comfort yourself or distract yourself from them. But allowing yourself to have and express the feelings helps them subside over time.

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

Art is one way to express your feelings and bring attention to important issues.

“Another way to express our feelings is to create art.”

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

Show students one or two examples of artwork ([See Slide 5-10](#): For example, Rockwell’s *The Problem We All Live With*, the Vietnam Memorial, the AIDS quilt, etc.) that was created to evoke strong emotions, and in some cases, bring attention to social issues.

“Art can move people to take action.”

As each art example is shared, students can discuss (1) what they noticed about the art and (2) their emotional reaction to the artwork.

“What message is the artist trying to convey?”

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

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

“Why do you think the artist created this piece of art?”

“What other ways can artwork invite responses or participation?”

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 it means 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 their lost loved one through participation in the art.

"How does this art make you feel?"

"How does this art unify us?"

"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](#).