📖 **LESSON PLAN**

The Social and Emotional Impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic

Grade Level: 3–5

Subjects

Health, Science, Social emotional learning, Social studies

Themes

Change, Family and community, Identity

What Students Will Uncover

> Students will reflect on changes in their lives due to the Covid-19 pandemic

Essential Questions

- Why is social distancing and isolation so difficult?

- How do changes in routine affect our daily lives?

- What is normal?

Lesson Overview

Students will watch the short film *Cocoon*, told from the perspective of elementary, middle, and high school students during the global lockdown in the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. Students will engage in learning activities that prompt them to examine their thoughts and feelings about the pandemic and the ways in which it has impacted their lives and communities.

COMPANION FILM

Cocoon

by Andrew Hinton

Materials

- Online access to the film *Cocoon* by Andrew Hinton

- Note-taking sheet: How I Feel About the Pandemic

- Optional: Film Analysis Tool

SDGs

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Standards & Frameworks

- SEL Competencies

- NCSS Themes

- C3 Framework

- CCSS ELA Standards

Key Issue

The social and emotional lives of students have been impacted due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Lesson Objectives

Students will:

- Examine their feelings about the Covid-19 pandemic

- Understand the need for community and social interaction

- Recognize the ways in which people in society are impacted by the pandemic

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Background

Putting the Film in Context

This section is intended for the educator and provides information about the film Cocoon *and the ways in which Covid-19 has impacted society, education, and learning.*

In early 2020, the Covid-19 virus rapidly made its way to the United States and would end up shutting down many businesses and schools for months. The pandemic impacted many aspects of daily life but most significantly disrupted the world economy and the health and well-being of individuals and communities around the world.

Millions of people worldwide contracted Covid-19 and hundreds of thousands died from the virus. As of March 2021, nearly 2.55 million people worldwide, including 500,000 in the U.S. alone, had died from Covid.[1] Covid-19 also directly impacted the mental and physical health of many, leading to anxiety, depression, grief, and teen suicide.[2],[3]

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1 Pien Huang, "'A Loss To The Whole Society': U.S. COVID-19 Death Toll Reaches 500,000." NPR, February 22, 2020.

2 "Adolescent's Wellbeing During COVID-19: Parental Resources." CDC, 2021.

3 Trisha Korioth, "Study: Suicidal behavior in youths higher during COVID-19 closures than in 2019." American Academy of Pediatrics, December 16, 2020.

In March of 2020, many schools shut down and students participated in distance learning by virtually joining classes at home.[4] More than 1.37 billion students worldwide navigated how to learn at home through daily online classes on Zoom or other digital platforms.[5] As of March 2021, at-home learning had continued for nearly a year, and even longer in some countries and states, forcing educators to reinvent and reimagine how to deliver distance learning to their students. Debates sparked over how meaningful at-home learning was for students, especially when so many struggle to secure stable internet access. Despite the challenges, opportunities have emerged from the pandemic and revealed new ways to think about teaching and learning.

The pandemic has exposed the limitations of a "one-size-fits-all" education.[6] Many educators have embraced a creative and customized approach, which has allowed students a greater sense of ownership over their own education. Some schools are using this challenging and unique moment in history as a teaching tool to help connect students to current events happening outside the classroom.[7] The suddenness in the shift to online education has meant a steep learning curve for both educators and students, and the long term effects of these changes is uncertain. Educational scholars have realized the importance of creating more humanized and individualized educational approaches as opposed to more institutionalized and standardized models.[8] This more humanistic approach has allowed students who otherwise feel alienated to flourish and engage in learning.

Cocoon, a short documentary by Andrew Hinton, captures reflections of students —ranging in age from 4 to 17— during the early months of the pandemic in Portland, Oregon. The film explores their perspectives and feelings about the pandemic on issues including school changes, isolation, job loss, and the health and well-being of themselves and their families. While students express their fears and insecurities, they also share what they have come to appreciate and what they miss the most— their friends, their teachers, and human connection.

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4 "Map: Coronavirus and School Closures in 2019-2020." Education Week, updated September 16, 2020.

5 "1.37 billion students now home as COVID-19 school closures expand, ministers scale up multimedia approaches to ensure learning continuity." UNESCO, March 24, 2020.

6 Jal Mehta "Make Schools More Human." *The New York Times*, December 23, 2020.

7 Emma Chiappeta, "Using the Pandemic as a Teaching Tool in High School." Edutopia, July 21, 2020.

8 Jal Mehta, "Make Schools More Human." *The New York Times*, December 23, 2020.

Lesson

Setting the Stage: Lesson Introduction

Engage students with this exercise before introducing the story.

Ask students to consider their thoughts about the Covid-19 pandemic with the following questions:

1. Ask students to fill out the note-taking sheet <u>How I Feel About the Pandemic</u>. Students can include words to describe emotions, memories, or observations in the circles. Ask students the following questions:

   • What is one word to describe what you think about the Covid-19 pandemic?

   • What are some emotions that you feel?

   • What are some things you have witnessed around you (home, school, community) that have changed since the start of the pandemic?

Engaging with the Story

Before watching the film, introduce students to the story and provide specific tasks of observation.

1. Tell students that they will watch a film called *Cocoon* by Andrew Hinton, which takes place in Portland, Oregon. Use Google Earth or a map to show this location. Next, show students a picture of the young girl which shows up as the hero image for the film. Have students make predictions as to what they think the film is about. Write these predictions on the board.

2. Introduce the story. Tell students the film documents elementary, middle, and high school students' perspectives during the early months of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. Ask students to think about the following questions: What do you remember most about the time you spent in quarantine? Who were you with? What did you do? *(Student responses can be recorded by using Seesaw, Flipgrid or another recording app.)*

Delving Deeper: Discussion Questions

Encourage students to examine the themes and issues raised in the story. (Note for educators: Just as quotes from a book or text are used to prove an analytical thought, students use the film to justify their reasoning.)

1. Watch the film *Cocoon*. (12 minutes)

2. After viewing, go back through the film and pause it at the noted times. Ask the following questions:

    0:18 - Why do you think the filmmaker chose to capture students through their windows at home?

    1:58 - How did students in the film express what they missed about going to school? What were your first thoughts or feelings when you learned that school was going to be closed? Have your feelings changed? What do you like and dislike about remote/distance learning?

    5:50 - How did students describe what it is like living and learning at home during the quarantine? In what ways did their daily routines change?

    10:33 - "I don't think we will go back to the way it was. I think we'll go back to a normal, but it won't look like the one we had … and I don't think that is a bad thing," said one student in the film. Do you think we will go back to the way it was? What do you think "normal" looks like?

    3:43 - As one student in the film said, "I miss my friends." What are you looking forward to most when the Covid-19 pandemic ends?

3. Look at students' predictions that were made before watching the film. Ask students to reflect on their predictions. What did they predict correctly and incorrectly? What information did they use to make their decisions?

4. As a class, explore the following questions:

    *   Why do you think the filmmaker chose the title *Cocoon*?

    *   Which part of the film did you relate to the most? Why?

Reflecting and Projecting

Challenge students to consider the story's broader implications and to integrate their knowledge and ideas from various points of view. (Note for educators: Just as quotes from a book or text are used to prove an analytical thought, students use the film to justify their reasoning.)

1. Ask students to make a list of the negative aspects they have experienced during the pandemic. Then, have them make a list of the positive aspects. Which list is

longer? Ask students: Does your list reflect how you feel about the pandemic?

2. How is life different for you since the start of the pandemic? Draw a picture that reflects what you miss most.

3. In the film, one student said, "I pay more attention to the birds. They were always there, but I guess I never really heard them. I guess I never really paid that much attention to them." How has the pandemic enabled you to pay more attention to your surroundings? Complete the following statement: Before the pandemic I _____, but now _____.

What's Happening Now

Provide students with follow-up activities and resources to explore current events and updates to the story.

1. For up-to-date Covid-19 information, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website.

2. One of the biggest challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic is how quickly misinformation has spread. Share with students this graphic from the World Health Organization. With a partner, have students discuss how they can stop the spread of misinformation during the global health crisis.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Take Action

with the UN Sustainable Development Goals

How will you support well-being in your community?

As the world continues to suffer from the Covid-19 pandemic, the health and well-being of our communities and loved ones are at-risk.

1. Learn how to protect yourself and others during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends doing the following to slow the spread of Covid-19:

    *   Wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth

    *   Stay six feet apart from others

    *   Get a Covid vaccine

    *   Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces

    *   Wash your hands often with soap and water.

2. Learn more about how Covid-19 spreads by checking the latest information from the CDC.

SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Companion Texts

These texts are recommended by teachers who are currently using Cocoon *in their classrooms.*

- *Blue* by Joyce Moyer Hostetter

- *Small Steps: The Year I Got Polio* by Peg Kehret

Resources

- "Let's Flatten the Infodemic Curve." World Health Organization.

- "How to Protect Yourself & Others." CDC, 2021.

- "Student Journaling During Coronavirus." Facing History And Ourselves, November 23, 2020.

Connections to National Curriculum Standards and Frameworks

SEL Competencies (CASEL)

- **Self-awareness.** The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior.

- **Social awareness.** The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior.

- **Self-management.** The abilities to manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations.

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies (NCSS) Themes

- **Theme 4: Individual Development and Identity.** Given the nature of individual development in a social and cultural context, students need to be aware of the processes of learning, growth, and interaction at every level of their own school experiences.

- **Theme 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions.** Schools, religious institutions, families, government agencies, and the courts all play an integral role in our lives. They are organizational embodiments of the core social values of those whom they comprise them, and play a variety of important roles in socializing individuals and meeting their needs, as well as in the promotion of societal continuity, the mediation of conflict, and the consideration of public issues.

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework

- **D2.Civ.6.3-5.** Describe ways in which people benefit from and are challenged by working together, including through government, workplaces, voluntary

organizations, and families.

- **D2.Civ.10.3-5.** Identify the beliefs, experiences, perspectives, and values that underlie their own and others' points of view about civic issues.

- **D2.Geo.12.3-5.** Explain how natural and human-made catastrophic events in one place affect people living in other places.

- **D4.6.3-5.** Draw on disciplinary concepts to explain the challenges people have faced and opportunities they have created, in addressing local, regional, and global problems at various times and places.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

- **CCSS.ELA-W.3.4.** With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.4-5.4.** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

- **CCSS.ELA-SL.3.1-5.1.** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on [grades 3–5] topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

How I feel about the COVID-19 pandemic
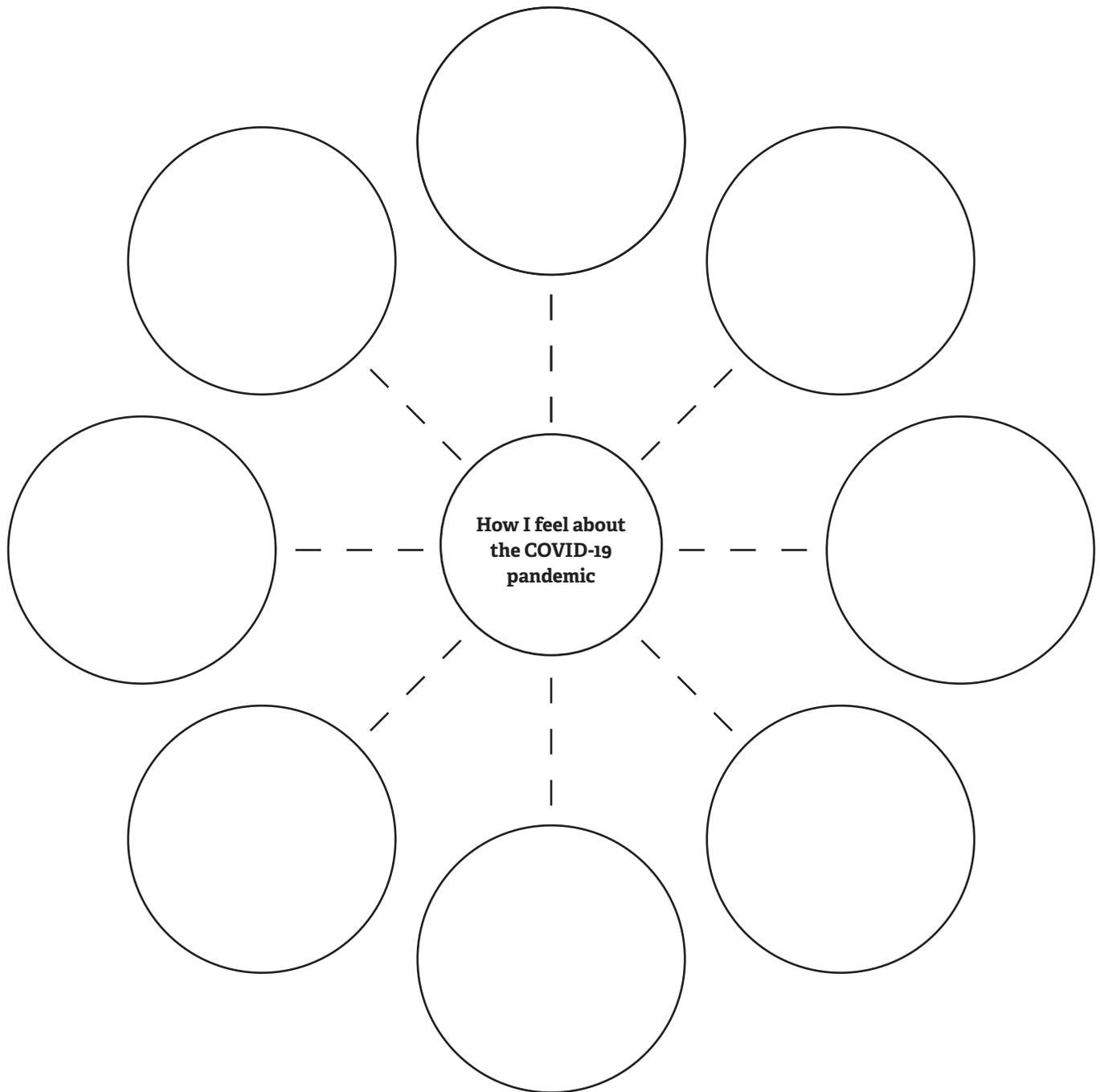
Film Analysis Tool | *Cocoon* by Andrew Hinton

Directions: Watch the film and write down what you heard students in the film share they experienced during quarantine. Notice anything that is similar or different from what you experienced and felt.

Social	Emotional

Physical	Other thoughts or observations

We Want to Hear From You

We'd love to hear how you integrate (or plan to integrate) this lesson into your classroom. What were your favorite takeaways and student responses?

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