

The overall experience of the COVID-19 pandemic was nothing short of a culture shock. As the virus spread, people's lives were flipped upside down as we were faced with unprecedented circumstances. We were in uncharted territories with new rules and restrictions being put in place that no one was used to. I personally was caught up in the whirlwind that was the beginning of the pandemic because of just how quickly it started and consumed the world. All of these new rules and cancellations happened at once and there was no true way to have been prepared.

I remember hearing my chemistry teacher talking about it one day and then the next week was the last time I would ever be in my high school as a student. We were told we would have two days off, in order for them to clean the building, and then we would be back in class on Monday; but the return to school date just continued to get pushed further back. The experience as a whole was very confusing, and at times very lonely. New rules of mask mandates and gathering capacities were being put in place, which are now second nature, but at the time I had never had to do anything of the sort. After the first few weeks of lockdown, it started to become very lonely because I had not seen my friends or most of my family in weeks, which I had never had to do before. Many people across the world were experiencing similar isolations and many people were losing family members far too rapidly.

After going through all of these experiences, there are two major lessons I hope future generations will learn: the first lesson is, if there is a global pandemic on, to listen to people in charge and stay at home and wear a mask, because it is for the betterment of everyone around you. The second lesson I want future generations to take away from this is to not take anything for granted. School, your friends, your family, and your

normal life can all be taken away from you exceptionally quickly, and you do not want the times you have with them to be underappreciated.