

When the Coronavirus first hit the United States in March of 2020, nobody really knew what type of impact it would have not only on the nation but on everyone's day-to-day life. No two people's experiences with Covid-19 are the same, and in February of 2022, it is still a very relevant issue. On March 10, 2020, Governor Charlie Baker declared Massachusetts as a state of emergency and urged everyone to go into a statewide quarantine. As a tired high school student who hated school, this news was the best news I could've received. All of the schools closed down and switched to one of the many variations of virtual learning. My town elected to not do classes over zoom. Instead, the teachers would post the content for the week every Monday, and all of the assignments would be due at 11:59 P.M. on Friday. Many students, mostly those who were hands-on learners, struggled with virtual learning, however, I thrived. As an independent learner, I loved having my work given to me with a specific due date, allowing me to learn the content and do the work whenever I wanted during the week. Although I found myself doing very well in school, I quickly realized how much I was actually missing out on, and I wished that my senior year would be normal. I lost my junior prom, the Europe trip that the seniors go on every year, senior field trips and activities, and almost my senior prom. Additionally, Covid-19 made the college process so much more difficult, as people were not allowed to do in-person tours at most schools. Many people overlook the impact that virtual learning had on the teachers as well as the students. At the beginning of quarantine, I would often watch my father, who is an elementary school physical education teacher, worry about how he was going to teach his students. Virtual learning was just as new to him as it was for the students.

Another thing that I enjoyed about online school was the fact that it allowed me to work during the day.

At the time, I worked at a smoothie bar, and during quarantine, we did curbside pickup. Working during quarantine was so unnecessarily stressful. Members of my boss' family were high risk, however, he never closed his business down. He left his business to be run by teenagers for months on end, leaving us to do not only our job but his job as well. During this time, I learned how entitled people really thought they were. Some days we would have wait times for over an hour, and people would show up after 25 minutes, yelling at us for not having their orders ready. Some people would even sit outside in their car and honk if we were taking too long. Covid-19 affected the nation in ways that nobody expected, making everyone show their true colors. Coronavirus is an issue that had no reason to turn political, and future generations should focus on how divided it made the United States.

For me, quarantine was a very productive yet lonely time. Aside from doing my school work and going to work, I didn't really do anything else. I found myself spending copious amounts of time on social media, just mindlessly scrolling. Ultimately, spending so much time on social media every day had a very negative impact on my self-esteem. During quarantine, social media sites, especially Tik Tok, was at their peak toxicity when it came to eating disorder and diet culture, and unrealistic body standards. Many of my friends and lots of other young women noticed social media negatively affecting them in the same ways. I felt as if I was disconnected from reality for a significant period of time due to the fact that I was basically living the same day on repeat. I celebrated my 17th birthday without my friends, and 3 of my other friends also celebrated their

birthdays only surrounded by their families. It got to the point where facetimeing with each other just wasn't enough. Summer of 2020 rolled around and everyone began to see each other again, always outdoors and while socially distancing. Things started to look up until September rolled around and we couldn't go back to school. The Coronavirus pandemic has affected everyone in so many different ways, and unfortunately, 2 years later, it is continuing to have an impact.