



HISTORICA
CANADA

CANADA DURING COVID-19: A LIVING ARCHIVE

Senior-Level Learning Tool

Countries, communities, and individuals around the world are grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic. How will historians remember this time in history? **Canada During COVID-19: A Living Archive** is meant to capture the experiences of everyday Canadians as they live through this challenging time. Canadians from coast to coast to coast and of all ages and walks of life are encouraged to submit to the archive – photographs, poems, videos, pieces of writing. The archive aims to build and foster connections with each other, our communities, and our country through the sharing of experiences and perspectives during COVID-19.

Canada During COVID-19 will act as an archive of lived experience for future historians, scholars, and the general public. How did Canada experience COVID-19?

[Historica Canada](#) offers programs that you can use to explore, learn, and reflect on our history, and what it means to be Canadian.

Message to Teachers

This resource provides guidance for students in grades 7 to 12 and educators interested in participating in the **Canada During COVID-19** project. A project of Historica Canada, the **Canada During COVID-19 Senior-Level Learning Tool** encourages students to think more deeply about primary sources, and the ways historians use them to uncover the past. Students will have the chance to develop a primary source of their own, based on their unique experiences and perspectives during the COVID-19 pandemic. **Canada During COVID-19** offers you and your students the opportunity to contribute to our archive and to participate in creating a living history.

How to submit to the Canada During COVID-19 archive

1. Post your submission on Instagram and share with us by tagging [@canadaduringcovid](#). If you have a private Instagram account, direct message us your submission or email it to us at covidarchive@historicacanada.ca.
2. If you do not have an Instagram account, send your submissions to covidarchive@historicacanada.ca. Remember that this is a public archive so anything you submit may be posted on the [@canadaduringcovid](#) public Instagram account.

Click below to share with us on Instagram

#CanadaDuringCovid



[@CanadaDuringCovid](#)



Activity 1: Introduction to Primary Sources

What are Primary Sources?

A primary source is any document or object created during the time under study. Examples of primary sources include letters, diary entries, newspapers, oral history testimony, photographs, and more. Primary sources provide historians with first-hand or insider perspectives on the event or time period they are studying.

Primary sources are first-hand sources from a historical person, place, thing, or event. Primary sources help historians interpret and come to conclusions about the past. They provide evidence about an event, person, or idea that helps shape our understanding of history. While most primary sources are created during the time in question, they can, in some cases, be created afterward. For example, an oral history interview with someone who experienced an event can take place many years after the event.

Primary sources come in various forms. They can be physical objects, digital material (including photos and videos), oral and written testimonies, and more.

Primary sources can be further classified as **accounts** or **traces**. Primary source **accounts** are created by people who had direct access to the events being investigated to describe, explain, or “account” for events that occurred. There are many types of primary source accounts, including interviews, memoirs, and autobiographies.

Traces are artifacts (objects) from the past that are left behind as the result of activities at the time. Although primary source traces are often purposefully created, they were not made to describe, explain, or assess a historical event, person, or development. Examples of primary source traces include objects like pottery, scraps of paper, jewellery, etc.

In today’s digital age, primary sources are not just physical objects; they can also be digital objects. Examples of digital objects include gifs, social media posts, or videos. The primary sources created for **Canada During COVID-19: A Living Archive** will be part of a **digital archive** that lives on Instagram. A **digital archive** is a collection of material that is accessed online. Digital archives can be made up of two types of material. One is **digitized material**, which are physical objects that have been scanned or photographed. In our archive, this could be a scan of a public health information leaflet distributed in your neighbourhood or a scanned photograph of a face mask. The other is **digital material**, which are items that are created digitally, and which do not have an original physical version. For our archive, this could be a video showing your daily routine during the pandemic or an audio file of a song you created to describe your experience.

Historians also rely on **secondary sources** to help interpret the past. Secondary sources are created after the time period being studied. They are indirect sources (not first-hand accounts) and offer an analysis or opinion on that moment in time. Examples of secondary sources include textbooks or documentaries about historical events.



PART 1:

Think about the content you have seen related to COVID-19, such as content created by official sources, (e.g., a public health poster with handwashing guidelines) as well as individually created items (e.g., a song parody about self-isolation). Which sources do you think reveal the most information about our experience(s) of the pandemic? Create a primary source list of five items/sources related to the pandemic that you would “recommend” to future historians as significant sources to help them understand this time. Share your list with your teacher or on your online classroom.

PART 2:

Create a T-chart and write “accounts” on one side and “traces” on the other. Using the list of COVID-19 primary sources you created in Part 1, categorize your sources as either accounts or traces: think about whether the source was intentionally created to document or explain the pandemic, or if it is an artifact of the time.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

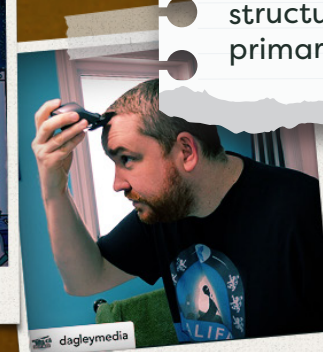
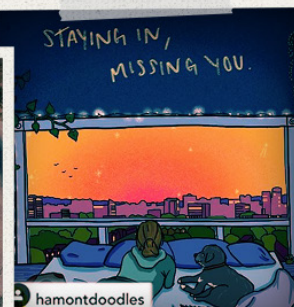
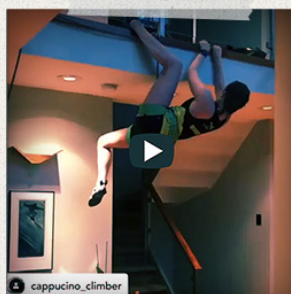
Why is it important to analyze both accounts and traces when studying the past? What can accounts tell us that traces cannot, and vice versa?

Day and Night

By day
Birds trill and warble in blue skies
Wind chimes ping like water in a creek
The spring sun warms upturned faces
The cat stalks, a scramble
The grass grows green
The day is mine.

By night
Eels eat into flesh
Murky water beckons a jump
The spring moon chills strained
and anxious faces
Invisible invader, a scourge
The grass turns black
The night is mine.

April 2020
©Peta-Gaye Nash



Teacher Tip

Engage your students in primary source analysis by using our [Primary Source Pyramid](#), available on the **Historica Canada Education Portal**. The Primary Source Pyramid offers a five-step structure for analyzing a primary source.



Activity 2: Creating your own primary source

Historians typically analyze primary sources from the past. However, today we are in a position to create primary sources for future historians. Creating a primary source is similar to making a time capsule. The primary source you create will reflect both yourself and the time you are living in. What you submit as a primary source will be used to help future generations understand what life was like during COVID-19. Think about the ways your primary source can contribute to future understandings of Canada during this time. Historians will want to know how people's personal lives, relationships, activities, work and school, technology, consumer habits, etc., changed during – and as a result of – the COVID-19 pandemic. When creating your digital primary source for the **Canada During COVID-19** digital archive, consider what format best conveys the message you are trying to share – picture, video, or writing.

PART 1: THINKING FOR THE FUTURE

What digital artifacts (photographs, video, writings, etc.) do you think future historians might find important or significant when studying the experiences and perspectives of those who lived through COVID-19? What information would future historians want to learn from examining these artifacts? Write down your thoughts and share them with your teacher or with your online classroom.

PART 2: THINKING ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE

You have the opportunity to create your own primary source. Think about your experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Consider writing down some of your thoughts in point form to get you started. Here are some questions to think about:

- What does your experience feel like? What does it sound like? What does it look like?
- How have you been spending your time (e.g., walking, playing videogames, talking with friends)?
- What have you been thinking about during this time?
- What would you like to share with future students/historians?

Part 2 continued on page 5



Student Tip



Since we know that we are living through a historic event, we have the opportunity to ensure that proper information and context is provided for the primary sources we create. Think about primary sources you have used in your own research. Were there gaps in the source that you wish you could fill? For example, was there an artwork where you did not know the artist? Did you use a photograph but not know the identity of the person in it? Were there certain aspects of a society or culture you studied that were not explained by primary sources? Keep this in mind while creating and submitting your primary source.



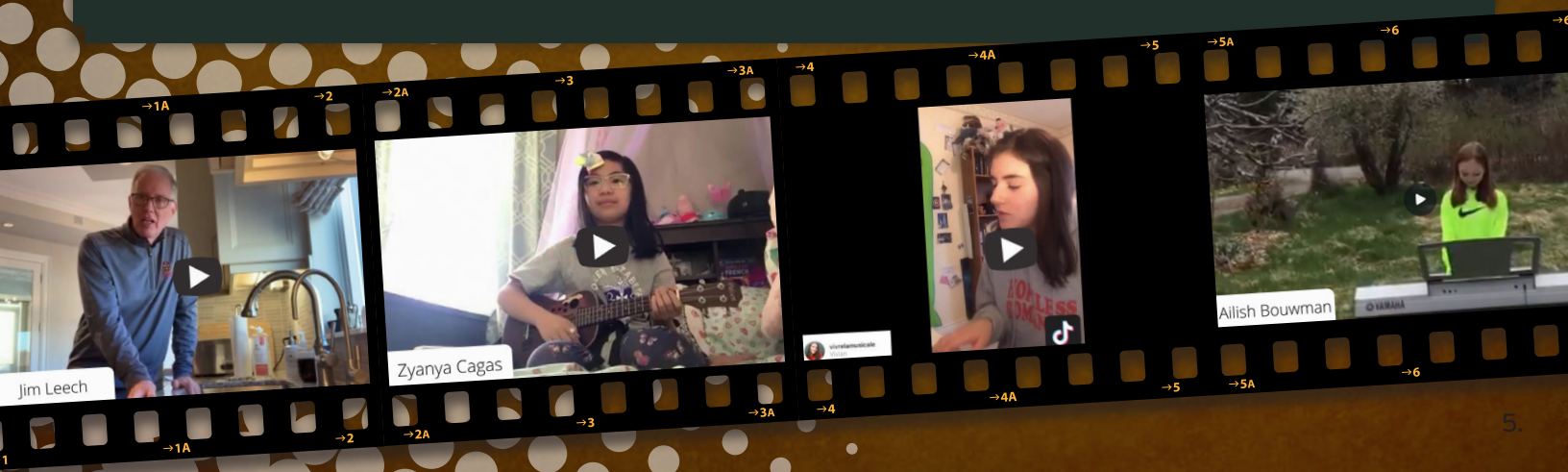
COVID-19 has impacted all aspects of life. Your submission might only focus on one aspect, or touch upon many. Use the following list as a prompt to start thinking about the different areas of life that COVID-19 has impacted. Which areas can you personally relate to?

- Technology
- Economics
- The arts
- Science
- Leisure
- Work and school
- Relationships
- Medicine and science
- Food and drink
- Supply chain
- The environment

When you create your source, try to include information that might be useful for a historian analyzing it in the future. The first step to analyzing a primary source is reviewing the 5Ws (who, what, where, when, and why). You can also use the 5Ws to help you organize your experiences – or think more deeply about one experience – and determine a primary source that encapsulates the experience(s).

- **Who** made it? Think about what details you want to share that might affect how a historian puts your source into context. You might want to include information like your age, your first language, or other biographical details.
- **What** does it show? Think about how someone else might interpret what they see. Try to make the certain emotion, idea, or image clear in your source.
- **Where** was it created? For example, during a walk, in your bedroom, at the kitchen table. You might want to include the region/province where you live.
- **When** was it created? Our experience of COVID-19 changes over the course of the pandemic. Think about what you felt and thought at the beginning of the pandemic versus now. A matter of a few weeks, or even a few days, can make a big difference. Dating your creation helps historians place your primary source in time.
- **Why** did you make it?

While all this information does not need to be reflected in the actual submission itself, including this information in an accompanying text (like in your written reflection in **Activity 3**, the text in a social media post, or in the body of an email) provides valuable information for future use.





Activity 3: Reflecting

FOLLOW UP:

After you've created your primary source, write a short reflection explaining your submission, and why you feel it represents your experiences during COVID-19. How have your perspectives, feelings, emotions, thoughts, etc., changed over the course of the pandemic? How is your submission different from what you might have created a week ago? Do you think it would be different if it was created after the pandemic is over?

DIGITAL CLASS DISCUSSION:

How do you think primary sources from the beginning of the pandemic might be different from those one month into the pandemic? Two months? Do you envision change over time? Write down a few predictions, explaining your reasoning behind them, and share them with your teacher or in your online classroom.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

Submit something to the archive each week. Later, evaluate how the weekly submissions show how your experience evolves over time. Does it stay the same? Does it change? What is different or similar from the start to the end?

Teacher Tip

Remember that this is a public archive so anything you or your students submit may be posted on the [@canadaduringcovid](https://www.instagram.com/canadaduringcovid) public Instagram account. Be sure to have permission from the students' parents before entering their work to the archive.



Teacher Rubric

For teachers who ask their students to participate in the **Canada During Covid-19: A Living Archive** project as a class assignment, we've provided a suggested rubric to evaluate students' submissions to the archive.

Submission criteria	1–2 points	3–5 points	6–8 points	9–10 points	Total points
Does the student demonstrate an understanding of primary sources through class discussion and reflection?	Student demonstrates limited understanding of the different types of primary sources and their characteristics.	Student demonstrates some understanding of the different types of primary sources and their characteristics.	Student demonstrates good understanding of the different types of primary sources and their characteristics.	Student demonstrates excellent understanding of the different types of primary sources and their characteristics.	
Does the submission demonstrate knowledge of Canadian experiences during COVID-19?	Submission is not relevant to the Canadian experience during COVID-19.	Submission offers little insight into the Canadian experience during COVID-19.	Submission offers good insight into the Canadian experience during COVID-19.	Submission offers insight into the current historical context and significant insight into the Canadian experience during COVID-19.	
Does the submission communicate ideas effectively? E.g., interesting format, use of sound/visuals.	Submission has limited creative elements and communicates ideas poorly.	Submission has some creative elements, but those elements distract from, or do not support, the submission's message/story.	Submission has creative elements that support the message/story. The main point or message in the submission is clearly communicated.	Submission has many creative elements that support and enhance the message/story. The main point or message in the submission is clearly communicated.	
Does the personal reflection explain the submission?	No personal reflection included or personal reflection does not explain the submission.	Personal reflection partially explains the submission and attempts to connect it to the larger historical context.	Personal reflection clearly explains the submission and connects it to the larger historical context.	Personal reflection adds depth and provides insight into the thinking behind the submission and clearly connects it to the larger historical context.	
Total					/40