

COVID-19 RESPONSES AROUND THE WORLD

A TEACHING RESOURCE FOR AGES 9-14



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Introduction

The coronavirus pandemic knows no borders. All of us have been affected by this global emergency but not everyone has been impacted in the same way. For the many people living in poverty, both in the UK and worldwide, COVID-19 is a crisis on top of a crisis. Refugees in camps with little to protect themselves. Women who are forced to carry the burden of unpaid care work. Families who live with inadequate clean water and sanitation. Children who were struggling to access a quality education even before the closure of schools around the globe. Although recent scientific developments suggest that an end to lockdown responses and some of the short-term effects of COVID-19 may be in sight, it is likely that the long-term impacts will be with us for many years to come.

At the same time, in communities all over the world, people have responded to this human emergency with compassion, heart and generosity – reaching out to support others in amazing ways. This global crisis has prompted many of us to reconsider our connections with those around us, to reflect on what we value most in life and to think about how to create a fair and sustainable future for all.

Supporting children and young people to make sense of the world at this time can be difficult. Each of us will have our own thoughts and feelings about the pandemic, with perspectives shaped by personal experiences, the people around us and what we see, read and hear online or from other sources. Many of us, including children and young people, are being exposed 24-7 to vast amounts of information about COVID-19 and not all of this is reliable. Many children and young people also have questions, worries and concerns about other challenges facing our planet, such as the climate emergency. There might be many things in our lives that are out of our control just now, but one thing we have more control over is how we respond to the challenges we face, whether through managing our own well-being or by helping others.



Photo: Liz Newbon/Oxfam

About this resource

The following activities help learners to discuss their thoughts and feelings about the pandemic with others. They will explore some of the incredible ways in which organisations and individuals around the world have been responding to this crisis before considering their own responses. Learners will also find out about ways to stop the current 'infodemic' – the rapid spread of misinformation and disinformation about COVID-19.

Estimated timings are provided for each activity. Ideally learners would complete all four activities, but the resource is designed to be easily adapted and you may decide to omit some of the activities depending on the time available and your learners' existing knowledge, understanding and learning needs.

These activities link to an accompanying slideshow which provides engaging images, useful information and additional activity ideas.

Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- › discuss their thoughts and feelings about COVID-19
- › investigate some of the incredible ways in which people around the world have responded to the pandemic
- › be aware of the difference between information, disinformation and misinformation
- › critically analyse information they find about COVID-19
- › consider their own responses to the pandemic and possible actions that they might take to manage their own wellbeing and support others

Curriculum links

- › **England:** English/PSHE/Citizenship
- › **Northern Ireland:** Language and Literacy/Learning for Life and Work/Personal Development & Mutual Understanding
- › **Scotland:** Health and Well-being/Literacy and English/Social Studies
- › **Wales:** Health and Well-being/Humanities/Languages, Literacy and Communication



Activity 1 - Where do you stand? (20 min+)

An agreement line is a useful way to encourage discussion about a complex issue, explore diverse viewpoints and manage any disagreement.



1. This activity is best carried out in a large open space. You might like to use the playground or a sports hall. An agreement line is an imaginary line from one side of a learning space to the other along which learners are asked to stand based on how much they agree or disagree with a statement.
2. First, establish some ground rules as a class to help create a safe environment for everyone to express opinions. An agreement line can be carried out as a whole class activity. Alternatively, splitting the class into small groups can help less confident learners to share their ideas.
3. Ask learners to imagine a line from one side of the space to the other. You might like to label one side of the space 'strongly agree' and the other 'strongly disagree'.
4. Explain that standing at one end of the line means strongly agreeing with a statement and standing at the other end means strongly disagreeing with the statement. Explain that everyone's view will fall somewhere along the line, and that there are not necessarily any 'right' or 'wrong' answers.
5. You may want to introduce a practice statement such as 'I love chocolate' to warm learners up and familiarise them with using an agreement line.
6. Read out each of the statements below. Give learners some thinking time for each one before they move into place on the line.

Agreement line statements:

- > I am worried about coronavirus.
- > COVID-19 has affected the lives of everyone.
- > Everything we hear and read about coronavirus is true.
- > Some people's lives have been more impacted by the pandemic than others.
- > COVID-19 has been good for our environment.
- > My relationships with the people around me have changed since the start of the pandemic.
- > Once this pandemic is over, things will go back to how they were before.
- > Once this pandemic is over, things should go back to how they were before.

7. Encourage individual learners in different positions to say a few words about why they have taken that position. Invite others in the group to respond these ideas.
8. You might like to provide the opportunity to move position once learners have heard from others and ask some who have moved why they have done so.

Possible discussion points:

- > Feeling worried about coronavirus is a normal response. We might not be able to change some of the facts about this pandemic, but we can influence how we respond to any worries that we have. Some background information about coronavirus and COVID-19 is provided in slides 3 and 4. See the [Useful links and resources](#) for some sources of support for talking with young people about the pandemic. It may also be helpful to remind learners about the policies and measures in place at their school to promote health and well-being.
- > Many of us, including children and young people, are being exposed to a huge amount of information about COVID-19 on a daily basis and not all of this will be reliable. See [below](#) for an activity to help learners understand the difference between information, misinformation and disinformation.
- > COVID-19 has had an impact on the lives of everyone, but some people have been affected by it more than others, both in the UK and worldwide. See slide 5 for a photo and information to prompt further discussion about this.
- > Many people around the world have been thinking and talking about how we can use the events of 2020 as a chance to create a fairer and more sustainable future for everyone.



Adaptation for remote learning

- > This activity could be adapted for remote learning by sharing an agreement line via an online meeting platform and inviting learners to take turns to annotate the line to show their position for one of the statements.
- > The above statements are also provided in the [Agreement line statements](#) activity sheet so that learners could cut these out and place them along an imaginary line at home or school.

Activity 2 - Spotting 'fake news' (30 min+)

1. Remind learners that many of us are being exposed to lots of information about COVID-19 every day. Whether through the people we talk to, social media and other online sources, the radio or television, it can feel overwhelming at times. Some people are calling it an 'infodemic'.
2. Use the 'statements' on slide 6 to make the point that although some of the information we see or hear about COVID-19 might be true, some of it isn't. The animation on slide 7 shows the difference between information, misinformation and disinformation and offers some handy tips for stopping the spread of false facts.
3. It may be helpful to point out that as COVID-19 is caused by a new virus, scientists are learning more about it all the time and not all scientists agree about some of the science behind the disease. This disagreement contributes to some of the misinformation and disinformation we might see or hear.
4. Find some different examples of 'information' about COVID-19. Give learners one of these pieces of 'evidence' and ask them to discuss the following questions:

- > What is the source of this information?
- > Have you heard of the organisation or individual who published it? Do you trust them? How do you know that you can trust them?
- > Has this information been reported anywhere else?
- > Does the information sound believable?
- > Is the information fact or opinion?
- > What could you do to check if these facts are true before sharing them with someone else?
- > Who could you talk to about this information if you are worried about it?

5. Perhaps learners could come up with their own checklist for spotting misinformation or disinformation.
6. See Oxfam's [Teaching Controversial Issues](#) guide for some more advice and ideas for helping children and young people to critically analyse the media.



Activity 3 – Responses to the pandemic (30 min+)

1. Invite learners to suggest common ways in which people have responded to the pandemic. Encourage learners to think about different organisations and groups, for example:

- > governments of different countries
- > scientists
- > healthcare professionals
- > schools
- > people in our community

2. It might be helpful to write a list or create a mind map of their ideas. Some examples are provided in slides 9 to 11.
3. Explain that many charities are also working in the UK and other countries to support those most vulnerable. The photos, film clips and information in slides 13 to 21 describe some of the ways in which Oxfam is working with partner organisations and communities to respond.
4. See the notes in slides 9 to 17 for some activity ideas to help learners investigate and understand some of these responses in more detail.



Activity 4 - Thinking about my response (30 min+)

Ideally this activity would be carried out in pairs or groups of three, but learners could also carry it out individually before sharing their ideas with others.

1. Remind learners that feeling worried or anxious about COVID-19 and/or its impacts such as on their learning or the jobs of their parents or carers is a completely normal response. Explain that there will always be some things in life that we can't control, but that there are also things that we can influence. Many of the events of recent months are out of our control but we can control how we respond to them. There are lots of ways in which we can take action to support our own wellbeing and that of the people around us. Reaching out to support others is known to be a way in which we can support our own wellbeing too.¹
2. Distribute copies of the [Sorting possible responses](#) activity sheet. Ask learners to read the possible responses and then sort them according to which group they think each one best fits.

- > Me, my family and friends
- > My community
- > Our world

3. Learners could highlight the responses in three different colours. Alternatively, they could cut out the cards and arrange them into three groups as shown in slide 23. Explain that there are no right or wrong answers and that some of the responses could be put into more than one of the categories.
4. Encourage learners to think of their own ideas of responses that people could take. Allow time for learners to share their ideas with others. You might like to finish by asking learners to each choose one or more actions to take as part of their response to COVID-19. Perhaps you could create a rainbow of hands to display, with each learner decorating a hand with their response(s). See slide 24 for some inspiration!



Useful links and resources

- Many organisations, such as [Young Minds](#), [Young Scot](#), the [NSPCC](#) and [UNICEF](#), offer handy tips and advice for talking with children and young people about coronavirus.
- The [British Red Cross](#) have some useful teaching resources around related themes such as tackling loneliness, building resilience and managing wellbeing.
- The Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning programme has published [Learning from a Pandemic](#), an excellent resource to help learners make sense of COVID-19. Find out about some major global infectious diseases, learn about how infections spread and investigate what we can do to stop the spread of COVID-19 and stay safe.
- Complex issues such as this pandemic can provoke strong, varied and often contradictory responses. See Oxfam's [Teaching Controversial Issues](#) guide for guidance, strategies and practical activities for managing controversial issues both in and out of the classroom.
- See [Get Global!](#) for a wealth of ideas on how to support young people to be active global citizens – to think about issues that are important to them as well as to plan and participate in action. Although aimed at ages 11-16, many of the activities in this resource could easily be adapted for use with younger children.
- Oxfam is working with partner organisations and communities to help stop the spread of COVID-19. We're providing vital support like handwashing facilities, clean water, toilets and soap in the most vulnerable communities. Find out more about [our response](#).
- Find out about some of the ways in which Oxfam is working with others to stand up for those most impacted by the pandemic: calling for a [global ceasefire](#), campaigning for a 'people's vaccine' and urging the UK government to do more to support a [safe return to school for all children everywhere](#).



Further information

A crisis on top of crisis

COVID-19 is having devastating impacts everywhere, but the poorest and most vulnerable people are likely to be hardest hit - both in the UK and around the globe. For many, this pandemic is a crisis on top of crisis. People faced with conflict, disaster and poverty are often already struggling without vital basics like water, food, sanitation and access to healthcare. This is also an economic emergency, as the pandemic threatens livelihoods across the world.

In the last 15 years, extreme poverty has been halved but the impacts of the pandemic are already reversing this progress. Half a billion more people worldwide are at risk of being pushed into poverty², with millions facing acute hunger as lockdown responses and other COVID-19 safety measures stifle incomes. An estimated 400 million people, and disproportionately women, have lost their jobs.³ In the UK, a recent report found that almost 700,000 people have been driven into poverty as a result of the economic impacts of the pandemic, pushing the total number of people living in poverty to more than 15 million people - that's roughly one in five people.⁴

COVID-19 has further exposed and worsened inequalities such as those based on gender. Women make up almost 70% of health care workers⁵, exposing them to greater risk of catching COVID-19. Women are also three times more likely to be expected to carry out unpaid caring responsibilities⁶ for their family (things like childcare and looking after elderly relatives). School closures and the spread of the disease have placed increasing demands on those providing unpaid care, making it even harder for them to earn an income. Women living in poverty, single mothers and essential workers as well as those belonging to minority racial and ethnic groups are being pushed furthest to the margins.⁷

Oxfam is working with local teams and partners to provide life-saving essentials such as handwashing facilities, clean water, toilets and soap in vulnerable communities and circumstances. At the same time, we are joining together with organisations and people worldwide to urge the UK and other governments to do more to tackle the existing inequalities and injustices that have been further exposed by this crisis, putting the most vulnerable at even greater risk.



Photo: Fabeha Mohir/Oxfam

Agreement line statements

Activity sheet

I am worried about coronavirus.	COVID-19 has affected the lives of everyone.	Everything we hear and read about coronavirus is true.	Some people's lives have been more impacted by the pandemic than others.
COVID-19 has been good for our environment.	My relationships with the people around me have changed since the start of the pandemic.	Once this pandemic is over, things will go back to how they were before.	Once this pandemic is over, things should go back to how they were before.

Strongly agree

Strongly disagree



Sorting possible responses

Activity sheet

> Read the possible responses below and then sort them into these groups:

- **Me, my family and friends**
- **My community**
- **Our world**

- > You might like to highlight the responses in three different colours. Or you could cut out the cards and sort them into different groups.
- > Remember that there are no right or wrong answers. Some of the actions could be put into more than one of the groups.

Help my younger brother or sister with their homework or home learning.	Design and write a postcard to send to a neighbour or resident in a local care home.
Stop to think about whether information is true before sharing it with others.	Fundraise for a charity working to support vulnerable communities in other countries.
Donate food to a local foodbank.	Talk to someone about any worries I have.
Get in touch with a friend or family member I haven't spoken to for a while.	Write a thank-you card or message for someone at home or school who has helped me recently.
Create a poster or presentation to raise awareness of some of the impacts of COVID-19 on people living in poverty.	Do a sort out at home to find any clothes or toys that I no longer want and donate them to a charity shop.
Write or draw things that I am grateful for - either on my own or as a family.	Raise money for a local charity working in my community.
Fundraise for a charity working to support vulnerable communities in other countries.	Join the Send My Friend to School campaign to encourage the UK government to do more to support a safe return to school for all children everywhere.
Help out at home for example by doing the dishes, tidying up or setting the table.	Organise a virtual bake off or another online competition to play with friends.

Can you think of any other ways in which people might take positive action?