

OVERVIEW

In the aftermath of the Tiger King's brief reign (see Topic 10.1), things got even weirder for the United States. In the grip of a nationwide shutdown, students and teachers were sent home to continue classes on a screen, school lockers fell prey to abandoned sandwiches, and parents considered selling their kids.

WHY DID IT HAPPEN?



The Pandemic? No one really knows. Theorists have an exhaustive list of potential causes: from bats to Bolshevism. Most people, however, suspect the Toilet Paper Industry of masterminding the whole fiasco.

KEY TERMS

Blended Learning

Imagine you're in a life-or-death version of the Hokey Pokey. Your left foot is in a school building wearing a mask, and your right foot is at home on a Zoom call. You get shaken all about on a daily basis by the turbulent dithering between in-person and virtual schooling. It's a classic "will-they-won't-they" scenario. Without the romance. Yeah, that's basically how blended learning works.

Quarantine

A time and place in which millions of Americans tricked themselves into thinking they really enjoyed doing jigsaw puzzles and experimenting with yeast.

Unprecedented Times

A state of being that somehow means you should probably buy a new Chevy Suburban or feel kindly towards all unsolicited marketing emails.

KEY EXPRESSIONS



"Let's Zoom."

In 2020, Zoom became the Kleenex of video conference calling. For classes, business meetings and family reunions alike, this expression became ubiquitous amongst those getting in touch virtually which, in 2020, was everyone. This was a big win for anyone who bought Zoom stock in 2019.

"No, you're on mute."

In the early days of panicked, awkward Zoom meetings, several important thoughts and ideas were lost to this very phrase as call participants fumbled with their sound settings. The longest muted diatribe on record is calculated at around 8 minutes and 24 seconds. This was particularly damaging to the shy kids in class who would finally pluck up the courage to speak, only to find their words had fallen on deaf ears. It's ok though. Things got better for those kids in college.

"Please mute yourself."

This phrase swiftly established a place in virtual classroom vernacular once it became clear that having to listen to a background cacophony of microphone static, chewing, or amplified breathing in a working environment, is, in fact, unacceptable. Save it for ASMR YouTube, people.

KEY PLAYERS

Teachers

When schools closed down in the pandemic, they were faced with two options: 1. Let America's youth succumb to Snapchat-induced brain atrophy. 2. Find a way, no matter what, to keep on teaching. Eventually, it was decided that the second option was preferred. Especially because on a national level, no one wanted the Europeans to have any more reason to use the phrase "Dumb Americans."

So teaching prevailed, but only due to the heroism of the teachers. These brave individuals (Tom Richey, Emily Glankler, Alayna Vernon - to name a few) spent the better part of 2020 battling unstable internet connections, frayed attention spans, and chart-topping levels of anxiety from both sides.

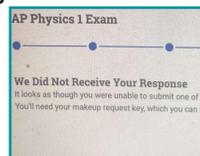
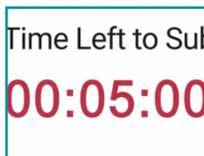


Artist's impression of a classroom in 2020. (Teacher top right.)

Photos of a NJ teacher in 2020, taken just 5 months apart. Note the accelerated deterioration of youth.



Tech vs. The College Board



If teachers all get a prize for MVP in 2020, the award for LEAST Valuable Player of the year goes to the upload button and its subsequent error messages on the 2020 digital AP Exams. Unreliable. Maddening. The WORST. Because of these, more tears of fury were shed in these AP Exams than in any other year on record.

MASK ETIQUETTE IN 2020

If presented with an image from this era in your DBQ, make sure you know how to identify those wearing their mask correctly vs. incorrectly. See images below:



INCORRECT



CORRECT

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