



Write to Educate

Scholarship Contest Winner

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Essay Topic: Examine the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on our society (human interactions, schooling, the economy, tourism, etc.).

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our society is facing many long-term challenges. There are not many aspects of our lives left unaffected by this pandemic. The lasting effects of this virus go far beyond the parameters of public health and safety. COVID-19 has weakened the economy, deepened political polarization, and impacted the personal lives of many.

The virus has prompted long-lasting economic effects in many industries. The pandemic brought travel to a standstill in the beginning which deeply hurt the tourism industry. The manufacturing industry was heavily impacted by rampant infection spread due to the close proximity of their workers. The demand for goods increased but the ability of manufacturers to supply them was limited. The high unemployment rates during the pandemic also played a role in the economic decline. The stay-at-home orders and fear of contracting the virus hurt small businesses including restaurants. With a dwindling customer base, many businesses closed for good during the pandemic. These effects on the economy will be felt beyond the end of the pandemic.

The pandemic has greatly affected American politics. COVID-19 has fueled the polarization of political parties in America by becoming yet another outlet for aggression between the two major parties. From the beginning, Republicans and Democrats have disagreed on almost every facet surrounding the pandemic. The parties have disagreed over the reality of the virus, wearing masks in public, how trustworthy the science behind the virus is, and whether it is necessary to be vaccinated. Anything relating to the virus or how to handle it has been a source of disagreement. The media has played a large role in political polarization. In recent years, the polarization of the parties has only increased and the pandemic has only added to this uptick. It stands to reason that the media coverage of COVID-19 has strengthened both parties' emotions and ideas concerning COVID-19. The deeper divide between the parties makes it unlikely that the parties will find common ground or an issue they agree fully on at any point in the near future. Future American politics will still be dealing with the impact of COVID-19 on party polarization in years to come.

The pandemic has manifested itself into many aspects of our lives, including personal ones, that will continue to be felt for years to come. COVID-19 threatened the education of the youth, took the lives of loved ones, and kept people isolated from family. With the sudden appearance of the virus and unknowns surrounding its spread during the initial outbreak, educators were impossibly tasked with trying to figure out how to continue teaching without face to face classes. A one week 'break' for mid-Michigan schools actually continued through the end of the school year. Educators navigated online learning and made the most out of remote learning but it cannot compare to a typical school year, particularly for our youngest students and those with special needs. Many people lost their loved ones without being able to say goodbye. The loss of a loved one is always difficult but being denied the chance to be there for them is another type of difficult. For those lucky enough to have avoided losing loved ones, their loss came in the form of losing time with family. Stay-at-home orders and fear for the safety of loved ones kept people isolated. Many people have now gone over a year without seeing their extended families which can have extreme consequences for those with poor mental health. The effects that COVID-19 had on education, families, and the mental health of many will be long lasting.

COVID-19 has greatly impacted the economy, political climate, and personal lives of American citizens. The effects on each will be felt for a long time to come even after the pandemic ends.

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