Rhode Island COVID-19 Archive
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About These Materials

The Rhode Island COVID-19 Archive (RICA) is a joint partnership between the Rhode Island Historical Society (RIHS) and the Providence Public Library (PPL). RIHS and PPL are aiming to create a crowdsourced digital archive to document and share the COVID-19 experience in Rhode Island. RICA is a state-wide "people's archive," dedicated to getting as many voices and perspectives as possible to tell the story of the pandemic.

These materials guide students through a set of activities that will allow them to explore current entries in the archive as well as providing them with prompts to create their own potential entries to contribute.

Learning Objectives

Students will learn what an archive is and why collecting human experiences matters

Students will become familiar with navigating a digital archive

Students will examine their own experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and create an entry that tells their story to potentially be contributed to the archive

Definitions

Archive- a place to store historic records that provide information about a specific group of people, institution, or place. Physical archives can be accessed in person or sometimes online if the archive materials have been scanned.

Digital Archive- an archive that only exists digitally and can be accessed digitally.

Crowdsourced- to obtain information by enlisting the help of a large number of people, typically via the Internet.

Intentional Collecting- Collecting information for an archive while keeping in mind stories that the collector wishes to be told and gaps in existing archives. For example, many American archives do not contain records about the experiences of people of color. So today, many American institutions aim to collect records that can speak to those stories.

Activity 1: What is an Archive?

The Rhode Island COVID-19 was designed to collect and share the experiences of all Rhode Islanders during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, archives come in all different shapes and sizes. In this lesson, we'll explore some local archives to see what we can find about the *Gaspee Affair* and how archives relate to one another.

1. Visit the [Rhode Island Historical Society's collections page](#) to see what is in their archive. Use the filters at the bottom of the page to narrow your search for items related to the *Gaspee Affair*. After you've spent some time browsing, fill out the "Rhode Island Historical Society" section of the graphic organizer below.

2. Now, visit [Providence Public Library's Digital Collections](#) page. Use the search features on this page to search for items related to the *Gaspee Affair*. After you've spent some time browsing, fill out the "Providence Public Library" section of the graphic organizer below.

	What were you able to find in this archive related to the *Gaspee Affair*? What type of historical records were available?	What were you able to learn about the *Gaspee Affair* from this archive?	Who do you think decided to keep and archive the records you explored? How do you think it was decided to keep these records?
Rhode Island Historical Society			
Providence Public			

Library			

3. Now, choose any topic you like. See what you can find about that topic in the Rhode Island Historical Society Archive and what you can find about it in the Providence Public Library Archive. Complete the graphic organizer below as you search.

List your topic here:	What types of records were you able to find about this topic in this archive?	What were those records able to tell you about this topic? What did you learn?	What questions do you still have? Were there objects you wish you had found to answer those questions?
Rhode Island Historical Society			
Providence Public Library			

4. Thinking about the questions you still have and records you wish you had found, write down how you think historians today should consider records when collecting for their archive. How do they know what is worth keeping? How do they know what types of records to add to the archive? How can they fill in some of those gaps? There is no right answer here. The space below is just a space for you to write down your thoughts and reflect on the activities above.

5. Can you think of any collections of records or materials that exist in your home? Maybe you have shoeboxes of old letters and cards or albums of photos. Some of you may even have a Facebook page that houses old messages and photos. If you have something like this, explain it here. If you don't, can you create something like this?

6. What stories do you think your personal archive tells? Are there gaps? Can you fill them? What records help your archive tell its most important stories?

Activity 2: Reflections of a High Schooler during the Coronavirus Pandemic

In the Rhode Island COVID-19 Archive people share all kinds of information including

written notes, photographs, artwork, and recording of sounds in their everyday lives.

One submission is a reflection written by a high school senior called, "The Whims of a

Lost Senior." Read the reflection here: https://ricovidarchive.org/items/show/144

This student reflects not only on what they're missing as a high school senior, but what

folks in every aspect of society are missing. Consider your own reflections using the

prompts below:

1. Are there things in your life that were cancelled that you were looking forward to?

    What were they and why were they important to you? Has their cancelling

    changed the importance of these events to you?

2. Are there things that were postponed to a later date? What were they and how

    do you feel about the postponement?

3. Are there things that were moved to a virtual platform so they could continue?

    How do you feel about the switch to virtual platforms in your life?

4. Are there parts of your normal routine that are now gone and you miss? What are

    they? Why do you miss them?

5. Have you added new elements to your normal routine that you are enjoying?

6. Have you created anything that brings you joy in the wake of COVID-19? What is

    it and why does it bring you joy?

7. Has COVID-19 allowed you to connect or reconnect with people who you don't

    normally get to spend time connecting with? What has that experience been like?

Activity 3: Creating Your Own Contribution for the Rhode Island COVID-19 Archive

Using these prompts in activity 2 and anything else that comes to mind, create a reflection of where you're at, right now, during this coronavirus pandemic. You can write, draw, record a video or audio performance, etc. It can be long or short. When you're all done, we encourage you to share your completed project on the COVID-19 Archive. You can submit your project here: https://ricovidarchive.org/contribution. Even if you don't want to submit it to the archive, please share your project and thoughts on this activity with us at education@rihs.org.

Other Activity Options
- Create a photo documentary of everyday items in your life that have taken on a new meaning during COVID-19.
- Act as a journalist and report (written article or video recording) an event that has happened in your home or neighborhood.
- Create a video recording that documents your COVID-19 daily routine & schedule.