

Please turn in your Grammar workbooks and Tom Sawyer books this week.

Google Meet time will be on Fridays at 10:00 a.m. for 4th period

Google Meet on Friday at 11:30 for 6th period.

Everyone should attend. I will send codes on Google Classroom.

Week of May 4, 2020

Monday - Read the Newsela article, "What Defines a Classic?"

Take the quiz on Newsela site and submit

Tuesday - Noredink assignment - Recognizing claims

Wednesday - Read the Newsela article, "Common Themes in Literature"

Complete the Power Words activity and submit.

Thursday - Noredink assignment - Commonly confused words 1

Friday - Class discussion of articles read this week. Google Meet.

Week of May 11, 2020

Monday - Read the Newsela article, "Reaching Out in Times of Crisis"

Take the quiz on Newsela site and submit

Tuesday - Noredink - Commonly confused words 2

Wednesday - Read the Newsela article, "Lockdown Entertainment Goes Viral"

Complete the Power Words activity and submit.

What are you doing to combat boredom during this quarantine time?

Thursday - Noredink - Commonly confused words 3

Friday - Class discussion of articles read this week. Google Meet.

Week of May 18, 2020

Monday - Read the Newsela article, "Opinion: Kindness isn't just nice, it's more effective"

Take the quiz and submit.

Tuesday - Noredink quiz over commonly confused words.

Wednesday - Read the Newsela article, "How to Write a Haiku Poem"

Write a Haiku poems to share in Google Meet

Thursday - Complete class evaluation.

Friday - Class discussion of articles read this week. Google Meet.

Read Haiku poems in Google Meet.

I have included this so you can complete the journal entry from April 20th
Mark Twain Quotes

"If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything."

"Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to reform (or pause and reflect)."

"A lie can travel half way around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes."

"Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great."

"Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence on society."

"If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous he will not bite you. This is the principal difference between a dog and man."

Always do what is right. It will gratify half of mankind and astound the other.

If you don't read the newspaper, you're uninformed. If you read the newspaper, you're misinformed.

"Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear — not absence of fear."

Opinion: Kindness isn't just nice, it's more effective

By Arthur C. Brooks, Washington Post on 11.25.19

Word Count 828

Level MAX



When it comes to kindness, entertainer Ellen DeGeneres (pictured) has this to say: "When I say, 'Be kind to one another,' I don't mean only the people that think the same way that you do. I mean be kind to everyone." Photo: Ron Jenkins/AP

As politics metastasizes through all parts of American life, it seems as though everything must become subordinate to ideology. The latest casualty is kindness.

Recently, television talk-show host Ellen DeGeneres - a political progressive and noted activist for LGBTQ rights - was captured on video at a Dallas Cowboys football game, yukking it up and obviously having a great time with conservative former President George W. Bush. On social media, all hell predictably broke loose as people - including many high-profile progressives - criticized her for, essentially, consorting with the enemy. In response, she defended their friendship on her talk show.

DeGeneres finished with this statement: "When I say, 'Be kind to one another,' I don't mean only the people that think the same way that you do. I mean be kind to everyone."

Some applauded this, saying we need more of these sorts of courageous friendships in our troubled political times. Personally, I didn't think the friendship was so miraculous; I defy

anybody to spend time with our 43rd president and not like him personally. And while I do not know DeGeneres, I strongly suspect the same could be said about her.

Amazingly, however, many denounced her statement as foolish, naive and perhaps even dangerous. For a famous activist to place kindness above political outrage neutralizes her effectiveness - right? Wrong. DeGeneres is more powerful and effective as a leader precisely because of her kindness. In healing division, she not only improves the world but also is more persuasive to others.

Don't believe it? Let's look at one typical research finding. In 2015, researchers at Georgetown University and the Grenoble School of Management in France conducted a large-scale workplace study that asked the question: "Being nice may bring you friends, but does it help or harm you in your career?" To find out, they examined the effect of being nice and civil in the workplace on three specific work outcomes: being sought out for advice, being perceived as a leader and job performance.

Those who practiced kindness came out ahead in all three categories. And the better performance reviews weren't just a matter of a supervisor's perception: The employees actually performed better because they were nice. It turns out that by being nice, employees "increase the likelihood that others seek - and presumably exchange - information and advice, which, in turn, increase performance."

But there's more. The Georgetown-Grenoble researchers also concluded: "Rather than hurting themselves by appearing weak or deferential, behaving respectfully seems to garner influence. For leaders and potential leaders, civility appears to be very valuable - it elicits warmth, allowing for an initial connection or relationship to take root; yet it also signals the ability to lead."

In other words: Ellen 1, Critics 0.

Former President Barack Obama - the most successful liberal politician in modern memory - is clearly of the DeGeneres school of thought. At the October 25 funeral of Elijah E. Cummings, the late Democratic congressman from Maryland, Obama said: "I tell my daughters ... being a strong man includes being kind. That there's nothing weak about kindness and compassion."

I met Obama only once, in 2015 for a public conversation on poverty at Georgetown University, in front of a large audience. We disagreed very strongly on policy - but he was kind and generous to me.

The Democratic candidates vying for the presidential nomination might want to take note of Obama's words instead of taking every opportunity to show contempt for the people and ideas with which they disagree. Politicians on both sides should listen, in fact. A Republican member of Congress recently told me that he feels anguished because, to stay in office, he often has to be a person he didn't admire. He has to say harsh and unkind things, he said, even though he wants to be friendly and tolerant. Activists on his own side, who would accuse him of being a sellout and weak, had backed him into a corner.

I understood his conundrum, particularly in today's rancorous political environment. But I reject the premise that to win, one must be a jerk. There is no inconsistency between kindness and effective, winning leadership. This does not make me an idealist; it just means I am paying attention to the best social science.

Is being kind to those with whom we strongly disagree difficult? Of course it is - it requires self-control and maturity, like anything else that is worthwhile. It requires us to act like the people we want to be, not the way we feel at any given moment. It means seeing ourselves in others and actively practicing gratitude. But with commitment and repetition, we can become kinder people, leaders admired by others and a greater force for good in a troubled world.

Albert Brooks is a Washington Post columnist. He teaches public leadership at the Harvard Kennedy School. He is a senior fellow at the Harvard Business School. He wrote the bestseller "Love Your Enemies."

Quiz

1 Read the following words from the article.

1. *anguished*
2. *accuse*
3. *conundrum*

How does using these words develop the author's point of view?

- (A) Using the words helps to explain why acting disrespectfully toward others will negatively affect job performance.
- (B) Using the words helps to develop the idea that leaders can struggle with the decision to be kind to those with opposing views.
- (C) Using the words helps to explain why the majority of politicians avoid publicly expressing any strong opinions.
- (D) Using the words helps to develop the idea that behaving in a kind manner can improve damaged relationships.

2 What is the author's main purpose for including information about Ellen DeGeneres?

- (A) to show that celebrities often have difficulty forming friendships and showing kindness
- (B) to show that Democrats tend to strongly disagree with the views held by Republicans
- (C) to give an example of someone who has been criticized for her contempt of a former president
- (D) to give an example of someone who prioritizes kindness over political differences

3 Which selection from the article BEST introduces the author's opinion about kindness?

- (A) As politics metastasizes through all parts of American life, it seems as though everything must become subordinate to ideology.
- (B) Personally, I didn't think the friendship was so miraculous; I defy anybody to spend time with our 43rd president and not like him personally.
- (C) DeGeneres is more powerful and effective as a leader precisely because of her kindness. In healing division, she not only improves the world but also is more persuasive to others.
- (D) At the October 25 funeral of Elijah E. Cummings, the late Democratic congressman from Maryland, Obama said: "I tell my daughters ... being a strong man includes being kind."

4 What is MOST LIKELY the reason the author includes the quotes from researchers at Georgetown University and the Grenoble School of Management?

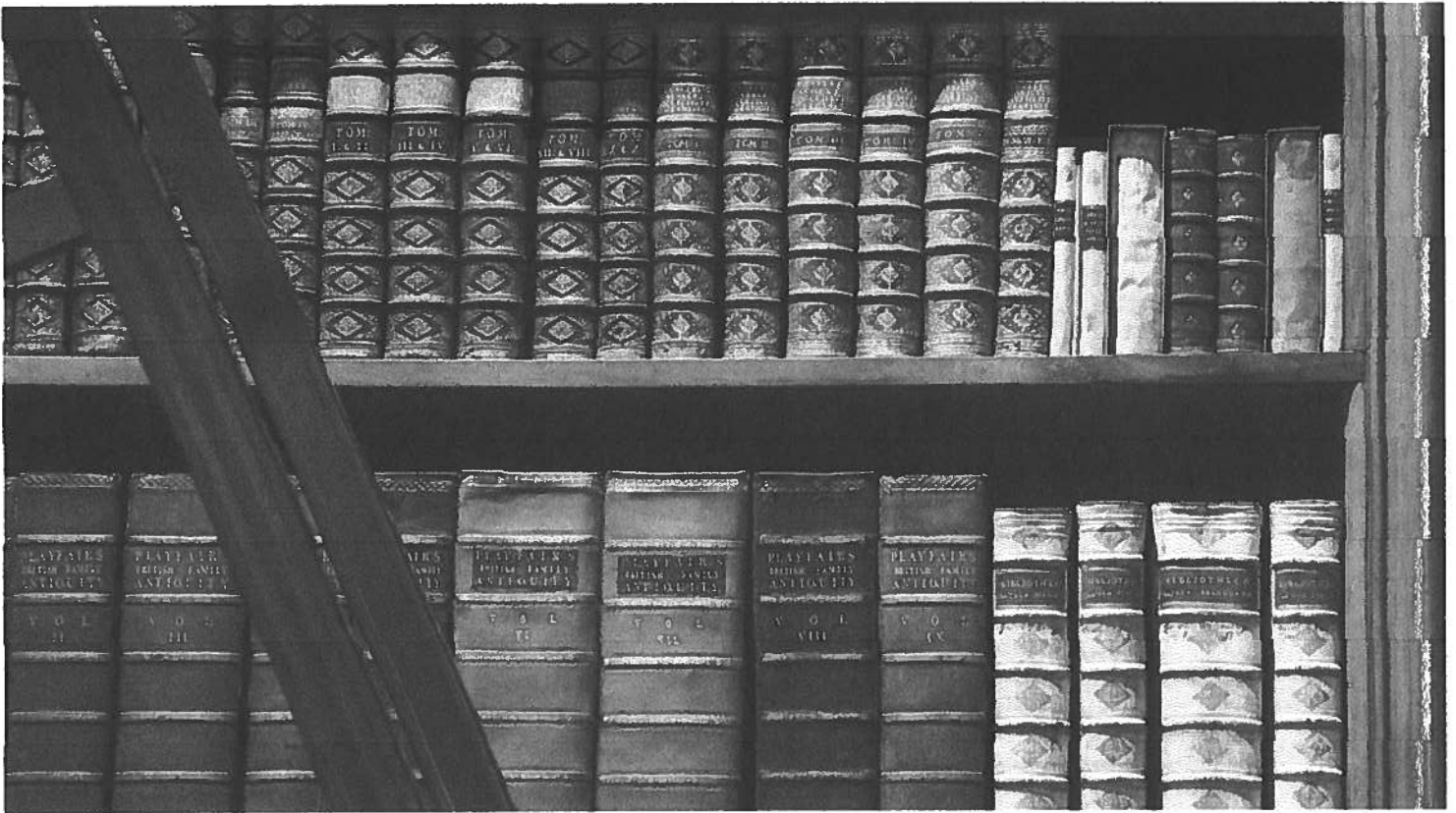
- (A) to highlight the benefits of being nice in the workplace
- (B) to explain the disadvantages of being deferential
- (C) to show how various countries place value on kindness
- (D) to describe the difference between respect and kindness

The definition of a classic in literature

By Esther Lombardi, ThoughtCo., adapted by Newsela staff on 09.11.19

Word Count **679**

Level **MAX**



Historic works on a bookshelf in the state hall of the Imperial Library of the Austrian National Library in Vienna, Austria. Photo by: Wikimedia Commons

The definition of a classic piece of literature can be a hotly debated topic. Depending on what you read or the experience of the person you question on the topic, you may receive a wide range of answers. However, there are some tenets that the classics, in the context of books and literature, have in common.

Qualities Of Classic Literature

To be generally agreed upon as a classic, works meet some common high standards. These standards look at quality, appeal, longevity and influence.

A classic expresses artistic quality. It is an expression of life, truth and beauty. A classic piece of literature must be of high quality, at least for the time in which it was written. Although different styles will come and go, a classic can be appreciated for its construction and literary art. It may not be a bestseller today due to pacing and dated language, but you can learn from it and be inspired by its prose.

A classic stands the test of time. The work is usually considered to be a representation of the period in which it was written. The work also merits lasting recognition. In other words, if the book was published in the recent past, the work is not a classic. While the term modern classic may apply to books written after World War II, they need longevity to achieve the designation of a simple "classic." A book of recent vintage that is of high quality, acclaim and influence needs a few generations to determine whether it deserves to be called a classic.

A classic has a certain universal appeal. Great works of literature touch readers to the very core of their beings. This is partly because they integrate themes that are understood by readers from a wide range of backgrounds and levels of experience. Themes of love, hate, death, life and faith touch upon some of our most basic emotional responses. You can read classics from Jane Austen and Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra and relate to the characters and situations. This is even with the intervening centuries and changes in every aspect of life. In fact, a classic can alter your view of history to see how little has changed in our basic human makeup.

A classic makes connections. You can study a classic and discover influences from other writers and other great works of literature. Of course, this is partly related to the universal appeal of a classic. But, the classic also is informed by the history of ideas and literature, whether unconsciously or specifically worked into the plot of the text. Likewise, a classic will inspire other writers who come afterward, and you can trace how it influenced works in its own time and down through the decades and centuries.

Classics have relevance to multiple generations of readers. By covering themes universal to the human condition and doing so in a way that stands the test of time, classics remain relevant. Because of the high quality of the characters, story and writing, people can read classics in their youth and gather an understanding of the author's themes, and then they can read them later in life and see additional layers of truth that they missed previously. The quality enables the work's ability to communicate to multiple age groups and through time.

Using Classic Literature

These qualities of classic literature make them appropriate for study. While younger students may find them less accessible, older students and adults can be enlightened by reading them as part of a formal study, book club or ongoing reading. To introduce younger readers to the classics, use graphic novel versions, editions simplified for younger readers or movie adaptations.

For older students of literature, classics have a wide variety of expert information available about them, giving background such as how and why they were written, analysis of the text and comments on lasting cultural impact. Classics likely also have study guides that can assist learners in their basic understanding of the text, such as by explaining dated terms and references and providing study questions.

Quiz

- 1 Which of these selections would be MOST important to include in a summary of the article?
- (A) A classic piece of literature must be of high quality, at least for the time in which it was written.
 - (B) You can read classics from Jane Austen and Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra and relate to the characters and situations.
 - (C) While younger students may find them less accessible, older students and adults can be enlightened by reading them as part of a formal study, book club or ongoing reading.
 - (D) To introduce younger readers to the classics, use graphic novel versions, editions simplified for younger readers or movie adaptations.

- 2 Which option MOST accurately and objectively summarizes the article?
- (A) There is a set definition of what makes a piece of literature a classic. These include writing quality, appealing to a wide audience, having a strong effect and key themes, and standing the test of time. Generally, only new students of literature remain confused about what makes a classic.
 - (B) Although there are different ideas about what classic literature is, there are common elements. These include writing quality, appealing to a wide audience, having a strong effect on the reader based on important themes, and standing the test of time.
 - (C) There are many opinions about what makes a piece of literature a classic. Some people believe that classics do not have to be old books, only that they need to be high quality. Others believe differently, and say a classic must be many years old.
 - (D) There are many opinions about what makes a piece of literature a classic. Using these opinions as a whole helps us understand what common themes a majority of classics include. They also help us to learn how to write our own modern classics.

- 3 Which option BEST describes the author's point of view about classics and longevity?
- (A) Books need to be tested by at least five generations of readers in order to determine if they are classics.
 - (B) Books that are older are often higher quality than books that have been written for modern audiences.
 - (C) Books that have not been tested by time have not yet earned the right to be called simple classics.
 - (D) Books that are very, very high quality should be called classics, because they will likely become classics in time.

- 4 Read the paragraph from the section "Using Classic Literature."

For older students of literature, classics have a wide variety of expert information available about them, giving background such as how and why they were written, analysis of the text and comments on lasting cultural impact. Classics likely also have study guides that can assist learners in their basic understanding of the text, such as by explaining dated terms and references and providing study questions.

Why did the author MOST LIKELY include this paragraph?

- (A) to show older students and teachers what defines a classic book and often makes it hard to read
- (B) to show students of all ages why classic literature is important in education and how to understand it
- (C) to give teachers a better understanding about why they should take the time to use difficult classics in their classes
- (D) to give students and teachers ideas about how readers can access and understand classic literature better

10 common themes in literature

By Grace Fleming, ThoughtCo. on 08.12.19

Word Count 1,004

Level MAX



Image by: Hugo Lin/ThoughtCo.

When we refer to the theme of a book, we are talking about a universal idea, lesson or message that stretches through the entire story. Every book has a theme and we often see the same theme in many books. It's also common for a book to have many themes.

A theme may show up in a pattern such as reoccurring examples of beauty in simplicity. A theme may come also through as the result of a buildup like the gradual realization that war is tragic and not noble. It is often a lesson that we learn about life or people.

We can better understand book themes when we think about the stories we know from childhood. In "The Three Little Pigs," for example, we learn that it's not wise to cut corners (by building a straw house).

How Can You Find A Theme In Books?

Finding the theme of a book can be difficult for some students because the theme is something you determine on your own; it is not something you find stated in plain words. The theme is a message

that you take away from the book and it is defined by the symbols or a motif that keeps appearing and reappearing throughout the work.

To determine the theme of a book, you should select a word that expresses the subject of your book. Try to expand that word into a message about life.

10 Of The Most Common Book Themes

While there are countless themes found in books, there are a few that we can see in many books. These universal themes are popular among authors and readers alike because they are experiences we can relate to.

To give you some ideas on finding a book's theme, let's explore some of the most popular themes and discover examples of those themes in well-known books. Remember, however, that the messages in any piece of literature can go much deeper than this, but it will at least give you a good starting point.

Judgment

Possibly one of the most common themes is judgment. In these books, a character is judged for being different or doing wrong, whether the infraction is real or just perceived as wrongdoing by others. Among classic novels, we can see this in "The Scarlet Letter," "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" and "To Kill a Mockingbird." As these tales prove, the judgment does not always equal justice, either.

Survival

There is something captivating about a good survival story, one in which the main characters must overcome countless odds just to live another day. Almost any book by Jack London falls into this category because his characters often battle nature. "Lord of the Flies" is another in which life and death are important parts of the story. Michael Crichton's "Congo" and "Jurassic Park" certainly follow this theme.

Peace And War

The contradiction between peace and war is a popular topic for authors. Quite often, the characters are gripped in the turmoil of conflict while hoping for days of peace to come or reminiscing about the good life before the war. Books such as "Gone With the Wind" show the before, during and after of war, while others focus on the time of war itself. Just a few examples include "All Quiet on the Western Front," "The Boy in the Striped Pajamas" and "For Whom the Bell Tolls."

Love

The universal truth of love is a very common theme in literature and you will find countless examples of it. They go beyond those sultry romance novels, too. Sometimes, it is even intertwined with other themes. Think of books like Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice" or Emily Bronte's "Wuthering Heights." For a modern example, just look at Stephenie Meyer's "Twilight" series.

Heroism

Whether it is false heroism or true heroic acts, you will often find conflicting values in books with this theme. We see it quite often in classical literature from the Greeks, with Homer's "The Odyssey" serving as a perfect example. You can also find it in more recent stories such as "The Three Musketeers" and "The Hobbit."

Good And Evil

The coexistence of good and evil is another popular theme. It is often found alongside many of these other themes such as war, judgment and even love. Books such as the "Harry Potter" and "Lord of the Rings" series use this as the central theme. Another classic example is "The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe."

Circle Of Life

The notion that life begins with birth and ends with death is nothing new to authors — many incorporate this into the themes of their books. Some may explore immortality such as in "The Picture of Dorian Gray." Others, such as Tolstoy's "The Death of Ivan Ilych," shock a character into realizing that death is inevitable. In a story like F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button," the circle of life theme is turned completely upside down.

Suffering

There is physical suffering and internal suffering and both are popular themes, often intertwined with others. A book such as Fyodor Dostoevsky's "Crime and Punishment" is filled with suffering as well as guilt. One like Charles Dickens' "Oliver Twist" looks more at the physical suffering of impoverished children, though there is plenty of both.

Deception

This theme can also take on many faces. Deception can be physical or social and it's all about keeping secrets from others. For instance, we see many lies in "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn," and many of Shakespeare's plays are centered on deception at some level. Any mystery novel has some sort of deception as well.

Coming Of Age

Growing up is not easy, which is why so many books rely on a "coming of age" theme. This is one in which children or young adults mature through various events and learn valuable life lessons in the process. Books such as "The Outsiders" and "The Catcher in the Rye" use this theme very well.

Quiz

1 Read the following paragraph from the section "10 Of The Most Common Book Themes."

While there are countless themes found in books, there are a few that we can see in many books. These universal themes are popular among authors and readers alike because they are experiences we can relate to.

What is the main reason why the author includes this paragraph in the article?

- (A) to introduce the idea that there are countless themes found in books
- (B) to explain why universal themes are popular
- (C) to introduce the idea that there are some common book themes
- (D) to explain what universal themes are

2 Read the two sentences from the introduction [paragraphs 1-3].

A theme may show up in a pattern such as reoccurring examples of beauty in simplicity.

A theme may come also through as the result of a buildup like the gradual realization that war is tragic and not noble.

The two sentences develop a key concept of the article by _____.

- (A) explaining how the theme of a book might be recognized
- (B) describing two of the most common book themes
- (C) describing two possible steps for finding the theme of a book
- (D) explaining how one book can have more than one theme

3 Read the following paragraph from the article.

Possibly one of the most common themes is judgment. In these books, a character is judged for being different or doing wrong, whether the infraction is real or just perceived as wrongdoing by others. Among classic novels, we can see this in "The Scarlet Letter," "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" and "To Kill a Mockingbird." As these tales prove, the judgment does not always equal justice, either.

How does this paragraph support author's position?

- (A) It shows that there is a lesson to learn from books in which a character is being judged.
- (B) It explains how some books have judgment as a theme and other themes as well.
- (C) It both identifies and explains the meaning of one of the most common themes of books.
- (D) It explains why finding the theme in some classic novels is sometimes difficult for students.

4 Which answer choice BEST explains why the author wrote this article?

- (A) to convince the reader what the 10 most common book themes are
- (B) to identify works of literature that have themes in common
- (C) to describe how to find a theme in books and why it is important
- (D) to explain what a theme is and to give examples of common themes

Why tough times can create better neighbors

By Stephen Humphries, Christian Science Monitor on 03.19.20

Word Count 1,401

Level MAX



Image 1. Flavia, who is 8 years old, and her mother, Silvia, put a banner reading "Everything will be alright" on the balcony of their apartment in Rome, Italy, March 13, 2020. Photo: Alessandra Tarantino/AP Photo

On the morning of March 14, residents of a 30-unit co-housing neighborhood in Boston, Massachusetts, emerged from their apartments for a flash mob. Staying more than 6 feet apart, the neighbors waved to each other and joined together in singing the Beatles song "Let it Be." One of the residents, a professional cellist, played an accompaniment for a sing-along of "Lean on Me" by Bill Withers.

"Everyone appreciated the activity, which brought much-needed levity and connection during this otherwise solemn, isolating time," resident Minda Sanchez says via email.

Similar scenes are playing out in quarantined neighborhoods across the world. In Wuhan, China, whole blocks of apartment buildings chanted, "Keep up the fight." In Rome and in Siena, Italians on lockdown lean out of windows and balconies with tambourines and accordions to sing songs of solidarity. On March 14, cloistered citizens throughout Spain began clapping in unison to cheer health care workers.

As the practice of "social distancing" burgeons, people are finding ways to meet heart-to-heart even though they can't meet face-to-face. They're leaning on video calling and social networks to meet an innate desire for social connection. But people aren't just staying in touch with friends and family. If anything, the global crisis has roused a sense of shared humanity that's compelling people to reach out to their immediate communities. Amid the outbreak of COVID-19, there's a countervailing surge of kindness among strangers.

"In times of great stress, helping others is a powerful way to reassert control in a moment where many of us feel helpless," says Jamil Zaki, author of "The War for Kindness: Building Empathy in a Fractured World." "Kindness toward others actually can be a great source of healing."

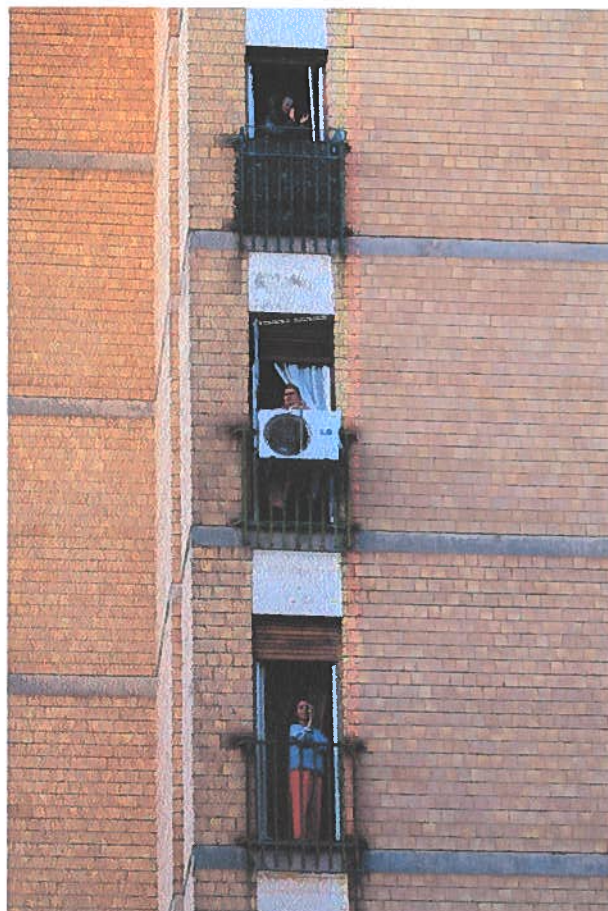
One of the most common ways that millions of people are being kind to others right now is by practicing the self-sacrifice of social distancing. For many, the key motivation is that they want to protect others. There are precedents for that impulse, says Jill Suttie, a psychologist at the Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkeley. A study demonstrated the most effective way for hospitals to motivate health care professionals to wash their hands isn't by noting the importance of safeguarding oneself from disease. It's stressing the impact it has on protecting patients.

To be sure, not everyone is acting altruistically at the moment. Fights have broken out in supermarkets as people wrestle for the last remaining item on a shelf. Some are hoarding hand sanitizer, face masks and toilet paper. Many individuals ignored widespread pleas to practice social distancing this weekend by gathering at restaurants and music venues. In response, governors in several states, including Massachusetts and Ohio, shut down restaurants and bars except for delivery and takeout and canceled all concerts.

Kindness Can Go Viral, Too

Even so, instances of selflessness have become increasingly common. In Longmont, Colorado, The Roost restaurant and pub has offered free meals to families whose children would have relied on the closed schools to provide them with lunches. Professional basketball players such as Giannis Antetokounmpo, Zion Williamson and Blake Griffin have donated money to cover the salaries of arena workers affected by the suspension of the season. And when Jordana Shmidman's bat mitzvah was canceled due to the coronavirus, parents volunteered to deliver 150 boxes of the catered food to quarantined families across several boroughs in New York.

Witnessing acts of kindness inspires others to pay it forward, says Zaki, a psychologist at Stanford University in California. In 2016, he published an article in *Scientific American*, *Kindness Contagion*, that included findings of studies about how people "catch" cooperation and generosity from others. This



deep-seated desire to help and connect with others intensifies during times of crisis and it crosses lanes of class, race and other divisions that typically keep people apart.

Case in point: When Germans began retreating behind closed doors earlier in March, Molly Wilson realized she didn't know any of the elderly people in her Berlin neighborhood. Wilson, an American who moved to Germany in 2016, teamed up with an upstairs neighbor to post flyers on mailboxes and trash cans on their street. Their notes offered to go shopping on behalf of those who felt unable to go outside.

"My husband and I are both on parental leave, so one of us can absolutely go and get some noodles and beans for somebody who lives a couple streets over," says Wilson. She also posted her note on Twitter to inspire others. "We need to do something off-line in order to let old people know that it's OK to reach out for help."

When in-person interaction is limited, technology can temporarily mend rips in the social fabric. Good Samaritans are using social media platforms to post offers to help strangers. For example, Jerry Xu, a tech professional in San Francisco, used the app NextDoor to volunteer his services. (Free to join, NextDoor connects members to others in their geographic locale.) "We can help people use apps/websites to get goods; we can help delivery with our vehicles; we can even help with medical emergencies," Xu wrote in an email response to the Monitor.

Beyond Offering A Cup Of Sugar

To Marc Dunkelman, author of "The Vanishing Neighbor," these neighborly responses to the coronavirus crisis are notable in their contrast to normal times. Most people's acquaintances resemble a model like the rings of Saturn, with the innermost bands representing the most intimate connections and each successive loop becoming less intimate. Over the past 50 years, people have invested more time on the innermost ring of friends and family. People have also invested more time in the outermost rings with online acquaintances they don't know personally but with whom they share common interests such as sports, hobbies or politics.

People have largely abandoned those rings in the middle, says Dunkelman, a research fellow at Brown University's A. Alfred Taubman Center for Public Policy and American Institutions. Those are the face-to-face rings of contacts, such as neighbors and once-popular associations such as bowling leagues, Boy Scouts, or Rotary clubs. Yet the coronavirus, striking close to home, offers up the opportunity for greater local connection.

"Could it be that in the context of this crisis, people do break through that initial barrier and say to one another, even though they're not supposed to be accosting one another or having real intimacy, 'Hello. You know, I live in apartment 2B. You must live above me?'" says Dunkelman.

For his part, Dunkelman maintains a listserv of nearby neighbors and they're using it to stay in contact and assist each other. Some have gone further. In Massachusetts, Mutual Aid Medford and Somerville (MAMAS) has created a shareable, public Google document to connect those with specific skill sets to those in need. In addition to sharing links to helpful resources during the coronavirus, it organizes neighborhood pods of hyperlocal text-message groups or phone trees since not everyone has access to online communication. Other areas have used the document's guide on how to replicate it. In the U.K., the burgeoning COVID-19 Mutual Aid UK network is up to 87 groups and counting.

The crisis will necessarily alter the way we connect socially during the crisis. What matters most is how we interact with others, says Suttie of Greater Good, pointing to two major research papers on how emotions are contagious within social circles – including online associations.

"They found that it spreads within three degrees," says Suttie, who recommends "trying to calm each other to the extent that we can and not raise panic because that helps all of us to be a bit calmer and to see things more clearly."

At the Jamaica Plain cohousing neighborhood in Boston, Sanchez is going to institute more sing-alongs. On March 15 they reconvened to sing the Bill Withers song "Lovely Day." On March 16, they sang "With a Little Help From My Friends" by the Beatles and danced to Gloria Gaynor's "I Will Survive."

The activity not only brought community members to their feet to dance in the sun, it brought many to tears.

"Neighbors have already started sharing song requests with me," she says. "Looks like we're going to develop a playlist for community in troubled times."

Quiz

1 Read the following paragraph from the section "Beyond Offering A Cup Of Sugar."

To Marc Dunkelman, author of "The Vanishing Neighbor," these neighborly responses to the coronavirus crisis are notable in their contrast to normal times. Most people's acquaintances resemble a model like the rings of Saturn, with the innermost bands representing the most intimate connections and each successive loop becoming less intimate. Over the past 50 years, people have invested more time on the innermost ring of friends and family. People have also invested more time in the outermost rings with online acquaintances they don't know personally but with whom they share common interests such as sports, hobbies or politics.

Which idea is BEST supported by this paragraph?

- (A) People need to help vulnerable members within their community during times of global crisis.
- (B) The number of intimate friends that most people have has decreased in the last 50 years.
- (C) The different levels of social circles have increased as people have become more connected.
- (D) Technology has changed the way in which people interact within certain social circles.

2 Read the following statement.

Periods of crisis can intensify people's desire to help others who are different.

Which sentence from the article BEST supports the statement above?

- (A) "Everyone appreciated the activity, which brought much-needed levity and connection during this otherwise solemn, isolating time," resident Minda Sanchez says via email.
- (B) They're leaning on video calling and social networks to meet an innate desire for social connection.
- (C) In response, governors in several states, including Massachusetts and Ohio, shut down restaurants and bars except for delivery and takeout and canceled all concerts.
- (D) "My husband and I are both on parental leave, so one of us can absolutely go and get some noodles and beans for somebody who lives a couple streets over," says Wilson.

3 Why did the author begin the article by describing a group sing-along in a Boston apartment building?

- (A) to contrast different cultural responses to the outbreak of the coronavirus
- (B) to highlight the way people connect while maintaining a safe social distance
- (C) to emphasize the importance of social distancing to curtail the spread of the coronavirus
- (D) to explain the reasons residents were required to stay inside their homes

4 Which of the following statements BEST represents Dunkelman's approach toward helping others during the coronavirus crisis?

- (A) He created a tool that allows people in his neighborhood to communicate their needs.
- (B) He wrote a book that provides methods for people to stay in touch with loved ones.
- (C) He helped researchers in the U.K. develop the COVID-19 Mutual AID UK network.
- (D) He urged people to avoid face-to-face meetings such as bowling leagues and Rotary Clubs.

How bored families are getting through the coronavirus lockdown

By Washington Post, adapted by Newsela staff on 04.24.20

Word Count 852

Level 1060L



(From left) Alex Presley, Taylor Sharpe, Zach Presley, Wendy Presley and Lee Presley play a game with toilet paper while sheltering in place at home in North Carolina amid the coronavirus pandemic. Photo: Alex Presley

To understand the "Quarantine Olympics," an internet trend that has come out of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, look at the place where it began: the Presley family home in Cornelius, North Carolina.

If anyone had peeked inside the residence on April 8, they would have seen the Presleys playing dodgeball. Yet none of the players could see each other, and they used rolls of toilet paper instead of balls.

"We played through all the board games and everything, so we had to get creative," said Alex Presley, age 25. For the past month, Alex has been hunkered down with his girlfriend, twin brother and parents.

The rules of "blindfolded toilet paper dodgeball," as Alex calls it, are simple: Once you're hit by a roll of toilet paper, you're out, and only then can you take off the blindfold. To make the game even more challenging, the Presleys spun in circles to dizzy themselves before they began to play.

The result was utter chaos.

Absurd Projects Combat Quarantine Boredom

Alex created a video of the game, which he set to a soundtrack of Mozart and then shared on TikTok. In the video, five people stumble around a living room with their faces covered by sweatshirt hoods. Shouts mingle with the muted thuds of rolls bouncing off windows and walls.

The family's recent game night activities have made them internet famous.

The Presleys aren't the only people whose videos have gone viral during the boredom of quarantine. Many families are becoming social media celebrities for absurd projects during quarantine such as themed dinners and viral parody videos. These videos entertain people who are desperate for fun as the coronavirus continues to spread worldwide.

Blindfolded toilet paper dodgeball is just one event in the Presleys's "Quarantine Olympics." The competition series has gone viral on TikTok.

The contest began in early April after Alex suggested that his family attempt a challenge he had seen. In the original challenge, participants compete to see how long they can drink water from a cup, using only a straw. While the participant drinks, the cup is continuously refilled with water.

The Presleys' "Straw Challenge" was an instant hit, drawing 7.5 million views on TikTok.

Lively Family Dinners

Now, the family is coming up with new events. Fans watching at home root for their favorite player and play the games themselves. In recent days, the family has faced off in other unconventional contests.

"We try to keep them simple and something that other families that are watching can play along as well," Alex said of the events.

Another family who now has too much free time is the Cannuscios from Massachusetts. Derek Cannuscio, a 14-year-old with a passion for cooking and comedy, has turned family dinners into extravagant themed experiences that are wildly popular on TikTok.

Derek treats his family to themed dinners two or three nights a week. He combines his skills in the kitchen with light comedy to recreate restaurant experiences.

In one video, Derek is a hibachi chef. He whips up fried rice and shrimp on a griddle.

Derek's sister, 18-year-old Caitlin Cannuscio, said that Derek's dinners, which are made using supplies he finds around the house, have inspired other families to experiment with their own meals and come up with their own themes.

"I don't know what I would be doing in quarantine without this," said Caitlin, who films the meals for TikTok.

Song Lyrics Get A Rewrite

Other families have channeled their energy into creating parody videos.

The Marshes, a family of six from the United Kingdom, went viral in late March. The family shared their isolation-themed arrangement of "One Day More" from the musical "Les Misérables." Ben Marsh said that the new lyrics came "out of the different frustrations that everyone has had over the last couple of weeks."

"One day more, another day another destiny, shopping for online delivery," sings Danielle Marsh, Ben's wife, in a video posted on Facebook.

The video has received worldwide recognition and was even shared by Academy Award-winner Anne Hathaway. Hathaway won an Oscar in 2013 for her role in "Les Misérables."

Canadian author Joel Sutherland and his family filmed a live-action parody of the title sequence for "The Simpsons." The family used a smartphone, old Halloween costumes and props found around their house.

Creative Projects Keep Families Busy

The video recreates the cartoon's introduction shot-for-shot. Sutherland posted the finished product to Twitter on April 8. It has been shared by the "The Simpsons" producer, Al Jean, and the show's official Twitter account.

"Doing creative projects is a good way of keeping yourself busy and keeping yourself not depressed," Colleen Morris said. Morris is Sutherland's wife.

For many families, outlandish activities during lockdowns have helped strengthen their relationships with each other.

Before sheltering in place, Caitlin Cannuscio said her family was often so busy that they "never really ate dinner together."

"I'm supposed to be at college, so I haven't had dinner with them in a while," said Caitlin, a freshman at Fordham University in New York. "This has all really just brought us together."

Quiz


- 1 Which sentence from the section "Absurd Projects Combat Quarantine Boredom" BEST explains the effect the Presleys' videos have had?
- (A) Alex created a video of the game, which he set to a soundtrack of Mozart and then shared on TikTok.
 - (B) Blindfolded toilet paper dodgeball is just one event in the Presleys' "Quarantine Olympics."
 - (C) The contest began in early April after Alex suggested that his family attempt a challenge he had seen.
 - (D) The Presleys' "Straw Challenge" was an instant hit, drawing 7.5 million views on TikTok.
- 2 Which section from the article BEST explains why the "Quarantine Olympics" have been so popular?
- (A) introduction [paragraphs 1-5]
 - (B) "Absurd Projects Combat Quarantine Boredom"
 - (C) "Lively Family Dinners"
 - (D) "Song Lyrics Get A Rewrite"
- 3 Which answer choice describes two central ideas of the article?
1. *The Presleys started doing fun but strange challenges in their home.*
 2. *Many families enjoy and are inspired by the Presleys' videos.*
 3. *Fun family projects can bring families closer together during a hard time.*
 4. *Caitlin Cannuscio noticed her family cooking together more in quarantine.*
- (A) 1 and 2
 - (B) 2 and 3
 - (C) 1 and 3
 - (D) 2 and 4
- 4 Which statement would be MOST important to include in a summary of the article?
- (A) The Presleys are sheltering in place at their home in Cornelius, North Carolina.
 - (B) The Presleys' competition video series has inspired fans to also play the games.
 - (C) The Presleys' first video, "Straw Challenge," got 7.5 million views on TikTok.
 - (D) The Presleys recently played blindfolded toilet paper dodgeball.

How to write a haiku poem

By Stephanie Wong Ken, WikiHow, adapted by Newsela staff on 04.02.20

Word Count **978**

Level **MAX**



Haiku

Haiku poetry was originally developed in Japan. Now it is used by poets all over the world. Photo: ShinGozy

A haiku (pronounced high-koo) is a short three-line poem that uses sensory language to capture a feeling or image. Haiku poetry was originally developed by Japanese poets. They are often inspired by nature, a moment of beauty, or an important experience. To write a haiku, start by getting ideas *for the poem*. Then, write the poem with strong details and detailed imagery. Make sure you polish the haiku and listen to how it sounds out loud so it is at its best.

Getting Inspiration for the Haiku

1. Look to nature.

Many haiku are inspired by objects in the natural world, such as trees, rocks, mountains, and flowers. To get ideas for your poem, spend some time in nature and observe it so you can get ideas for the poem. If you can't go outside, try looking at nature photographs and art in books or online. Find a particular scene or object in nature like a tree or flower that inspires you.

2. Focus on a season or seasonal event.

Haiku can also be about a season, such as fall, spring, winter, or summer. Seasonal haikus often focus on a specific detail about the season, naming the season in the poem. Writing about a season can be a fun way for you to describe a particular detail you love about that time of year.

3. Choose a person or object as your subject.

Haiku do not all have to be about nature or the seasons. You can also choose a particular person or object as an inspiration for the poem. Maybe you want to write a funny haiku about your dog. Or perhaps you want to write a thoughtful haiku about your childhood toy. Try to only focus on one person or one object in the poem. Haiku are short. You may not have enough space in three lines to write every thought you have about the person or object.

4. Read examples of haiku.

To get a better sense of the genre, read haiku that are well known and considered good examples of the form. You can find examples in books or online. Some of the most famous Japanese haiku poets are Matsuo Basho, Yosa Buson, and Tagami Kikusha. Richard Wright and Robert Haas are two American poets who have also written many haiku poems.

Writing the Haiku

1. Follow the line and syllable structure of a haiku.

Haiku follow a strict form: three lines, with a 5-7-5 syllable structure. That means the first line will have five syllables, the second line will have seven syllables, and the last line will have five syllables. The poem will have a total of 17 syllables.

To count syllables in a word, place your hand under your chin. Then, say the word. Every time your chin touches your hand, this is one syllable. A haiku does not have to rhyme or follow a certain rhythm as long as it adheres to the syllable count.

2. Describe the subject with sensory detail.

Haiku are meant to give the reader a brief sense of the subject using the senses. Think about how your subject smells, feels, sounds, tastes, and looks. Using your senses to describe the subject will make it come alive for your reader. For example, if you are writing a haiku about a particular subject, such as your dog, you may describe the "clacking of its nails on the tile" or the "damp fur of wet dog."

3. Use concrete images and descriptions.

Avoid abstract ideas. Instead, go for concrete images that are easy for the reader to see. Describe the subject with details that are particular and unique. Avoid wordy descriptions or elaborate language. Try using simple language so you can stick to the syllable count required for a haiku. Do not use cliches, or phrases that have become so familiar they lose their meaning. Instead, go for images and descriptions that feel unique. For example, you may write, "Fall leaves brush the road" or "Dog chases a bright bluebird."

4. Write the poem in the present tense.

Give the haiku immediacy by using the present tense, rather than the past tense. Using the present tense can also make your lines simple and easy to follow.

5. End with a surprising last line.

A good haiku will have an ending line that is intriguing and leaves the reader hanging. It may leave the reader with a surprising last image or reflect on the previous two lines in a surprising way. For example, the haiku by Japanese poet Kobayashi Issa has a surprising last line: "Everything I touch/with tenderness, alas/pricks like a bramble."

Polishing the Haiku

1. Read the haiku out loud.

Once you have a draft of the haiku, read it aloud several times. Listen to how the haiku sounds. Make sure each line flows easily into one another. Make sure the lines follow the 5-7-5 syllable count. The haiku should sound natural when read aloud. If you notice any awkward or choppy lines, adjust them so they sound smooth. Replace any words that are too long or complicated.

2. Show the haiku to others.

Get feedback from others about the haiku. Ask friends, family members, and peers what they think of the haiku. If you wrote a haiku about a particular subject or object, ask others if they think the haiku does a good job of exploring it.

3. Format the haiku.

Choose how you want the haiku to look on the page. Many place the haiku in the center of the page and center the lines so it forms a diamond shape. This is how haiku are traditionally formatted. You can also add a short title at the top of the haiku, such as "Autumn" or "Dog." It is not absolutely necessary that you title your haiku poem. Many haiku do not have titles.