

Summer Assignment 2020

9th Grade

For Ancient World History, World Literature 9, and Biology, we're going to explore *knowing* and *not knowing*. How do we know anything? When scientists come upon a new idea, what happens to former ideas? Is it possible to fully understand an event in the past? Can fiction be more true than nonfiction? Are there things we can't know? Are there things we *shouldn't* know? Or wish we *didn't* know?

We thought a good way to get at those questions was to look at something all of us know something about—but about which all of us have questions. Please read, over the course of the summer, the following articles (and one video) on the COVID-19 pandemic:

Reading Order:

Stuart Firestein, *TED Talks* - "The Pursuit of Ignorance."

https://www.ted.com/talks/stuart_firestein_the_pursuit_of_ignorance/transcript?ref=playlist-how_scientists_learn#t-1097452

Ed Yong, *The Atlantic* - "Why the Coronavirus is so Confusing."

<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2020/04/pandemic-confusing-uncertainty/610819/>

Mari Webel and Megan Culler Freeman, *The Smithsonian* - "Compare the Flu Pandemic of 1918 and the COVID-19 Pandemic With Caution."

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/compare-flu-pandemic-1918-and-covid-19-caution-180975040/>

Erika Christakis, *The Atlantic* - "For Schools, the List of Obstacles Grows and Grows"
[Reopening Schools Is the Easy Part](#)

Dannagal G. Young, *Vox* - "I was a conspiracy theorist too."

<https://www.vox.com/first-person/2020/5/15/21258855/coronavirus-covid-19-conspiracy-theories-cancer>

Before watching and reading, spend 10 minutes or so considering what you already know about the pandemic. "What you know" could mean something scientific. It could include an event you've heard about. It also includes your personal experience,

both what you've witnessed and what you've felt. Make a list of *five* "things you know."

As you watch the TED talk and read the articles, annotate each piece: that is, take notes.

If you have questions, please reach one of your teachers:

Mr. Twomey-Smith (History): mtwomey-smith@mphschool.org

Mrs. Yeager (Biology): ayeager@mphschool.org

Mr. Preston (English): wpreston@mphschool.org

Have a great summer!

