



**Educator guide for *The Quarantine Atlas: Mapping Global Life Under COVID-19*,
by Laura Bliss, a Bloomberg CityLab Project**

This curriculum guide is best suited for middle school students (6-8), high school students (9-12), and those in higher education. Based on the subject matter and themes, we at Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers feel these age groups will best understand the content of *The Quarantine Atlas* to appropriately engage in class discussions and independent work.

Leading Questions/Activities

Based on the title, what do you think this book will be about?

Overarching question: How has the pandemic reshaped your home, communities, and everyday spaces?

What is the definition of an atlas? Have you ever used one before?

Educators: Collect various types of atlases (old, new, print, and digital) and pass them around to your students. Allow them to explore the pages and ask the following questions:

1. Discuss [cartography](https://www.environmentalscience.org/cartography)¹ with your students. What are different kinds of maps and how do they convey different types of information? (Reference maps, topographical maps, thematic maps, navigational charts, survey maps: [more here](https://360.here.com/2015/11/27/the-five-different-types-of-map-and-their-uses/)²)
2. If using a map was your only way to navigate while traveling, could you do it? Would it be difficult to navigate without your phone?
3. How can maps be used to build empathy and human connection?

Atlas Resource: [National Geographic](https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/atlas)³

¹ <https://www.environmentalscience.org/cartography>

² <https://360.here.com/2015/11/27/the-five-different-types-of-map-and-their-uses/>

³ <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/atlas>

Forward by David Dudley

1. “We marveled at mundanity.” What do you think this phrase means? Can you think of specific instances where you “marveled at mundanity” during lockdown?
 2. “An epic feat of shared survival.” Can you think of other moments throughout history where you could apply this quote? Are there other historical events where “shared survival” was necessary? What about in literature or film?
 3. Consider David Dudley’s mention of the phrase, “We’re all in this together.” Do you remember hearing this at the start of the pandemic? At the time, did you agree with this statement or disagree? Looking back on our lockdown period, do you believe this statement was true?
 4. How did you spend your “lost year” of the pandemic? What grade were you in? Did you experience any “milestones,” like a graduation, prom, birthday, a family wedding, birth of a sibling, etc.?
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Introduction: Why Maps Mattered During the Pandemic by Laura Bliss

1. What do the terms *annus horribilis* and *ephemera* mean?
 2. Laura Bliss discusses the importance of archiving the material aspects of COVID-19. Draw the first image that comes to mind when you read “COVID-19” and “Pandemic.” Share with your peers — were they similar or different?
 3. “The pandemic is ongoing, and many of its changes have become gratingly routine.” What has become “routine” in your daily life since the beginning of the pandemic?
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Domestic Rearrangements

Finding Home in a Locked-down World by Taien Ng-Chan

1. What do you think of the idea by Bernd Stiegler that “travel is a state of mind, rather than a movement through space?” Describe a place that you “traveled” during the pandemic. Where did you go? How did you get there?
2. Taien Ng-Chan describes the “art of taking notice.” Spend a morning or afternoon walking around your home, neighborhood, school, community park, or a shopping center — what do you notice? Why could noticing things around you be considered an “art?”
3. Do you believe you see the world differently than others? How?
4. What’s the definition of *perspective* and *perception*?
5. Where do you feel you belong? In what spaces do you feel most “at home?”
6. **Educators:** Consider discussing the term *microaggressions* with your students. [Here is a helpful resource](#)⁴ to navigate this topic with empathy and compassion to spark discussion in your class. Ask your students if they can pick out examples from this essay. [Here is another resource](#)⁵ on how to approach microaggressions.
7. Taien Ng-Chan described her room as a “memory palace.” What a unique way to describe a space! Do you have a memory palace? Where is it? What are some of the memories that come to mind when you’re in that space?
8. “Spaces — whether public or private, material or digital — are made of relations, and in the face of hatred, that solidarity is a source of strength.” Consider your spaces — what are they? How do you relate to others within your space? Are you welcomed in the spaces of others? What do you think the author means by “spaces are made of relations?”

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<https://www.onoursleeves.org/mental-health-resources/minority-mental-health/how-to-teach-kids-about-microaggressions>

⁵ <https://www.embracerace.org/resources/why-and-how-to-talk-to-kids-about-microaggressions>

9. Explore the maps from pages 8–37 and read about each illustrator. Which map was your favorite? What did you learn about their quarantine experience?
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Redefined Communities

Topographies of Attention by Jenny Odell

1. What is *topography*? How is it related to cartography?
2. Describe your neighborhood's topography.
3. "I walked not just through a topography of rock and pavement, but of power and privilege, where one of the biggest privileges is simply that of not noticing that the playing field has never been level." What does Jenny Odell mean by this quote? Can you think of any instances like Jenny where she was unaware of her "power and privilege?"

Street Notations by Geoff Manaugh

1. Who was King Louis XIV? Do a quick Google search: what can you discover about him?
2. Geoff Manaugh describes navigating the world during COVID-19 as a dance — "a certain *danse macabre*, maintaining six-foot distances with other people and minimizing the use of hands." Turn your social-distancing experience into a choreographed dance routine! Choose your soundtrack and show your class your moves!
3. Manaugh mentions that walking through his neighborhood felt almost dystopian. Can you compare the pandemic to any dystopian novels or stories you've read? Or movies you've seen? How are they similar? How are they different?

4. Designing for COVID brought a positive impact to Manaugh's neighborhood. What was it?
 5. What are some of the "permanent marks" of the pandemic? Are these things positive or negative?
 6. Look at Aditi Shah's map on page 52. She says many things changed about her neighborhood one year after quarantine. What changed? Can you think of anything that changed in your neighborhood after quarantine?
 7. Explore the maps from pages 51-89 and read about each illustrator. Which map was your favorite? What did you learn about their quarantine experience?
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Natural Callings

The Trail That Led to Confidence by Linda Poon

1. Linda Poon describes her experience out in nature during quarantine. Did you get outside a lot during this time? What did you discover about the outdoors?
2. "It's easy to mark your destinations on Google Maps and follow the route; landmarks are clearly labeled and buildings are distinct. My life had felt much the same." Do you think we're too reliant on technology? Would you need Google Maps to navigate from place to place?
3. Poon mentions feeling lost — physically on the trail and emotionally in the pandemic world. However, she gives excellent advice at the end of her essay. What was it? How can you apply this advice to your life, right now?
4. Explore the maps from pages 96-115 and read about each illustrator. Which map was your favorite? What did you learn about their quarantine experience?
5. The maps included in *The Quarantine Atlas* are unique, creative, and eye-opening. Explore C. X. Hua's map on page 100. If your map had to include sounds, what would they be?

6. Activity: Walk around your neighborhood and take notice of nature around you, like plants and animals and weather. Create a map that focuses on what you observed. Did this map make you notice new things you never saw before?
 7. What do you think about John Palumbi's map of his cat's nightly route on page 107? What a clever idea! Do you have pets? Did you spend more time with them during quarantine? Or did you get a new pet during this time? Consider the pandemic from your pet's point of view. Write a one-page short story of their quarantine adventures!
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Virtual Connections

Just Show Me Where My Friends Are by Sarah Holder

1. "Doomscrolling" became a common word during lockdown. Did you find yourself scrolling social media more often than usual during this time? How did social media impact your quarantine experience?
 2. Sarah Holder describes the Find My Friend app as a "cartography of care." What do you think this means? What's one thing in your life you'd consider to be a "cartography of care?"
 3. Explore the maps from pages 124-129 and read about each illustrator. Which map was your favorite? What did you learn about their quarantine experience?
 4. Candelaria Mas Pohmajevic describes her map on page 127 and says, "I am nowhere and everywhere all the time." What do you think she means by this? What can you infer from her drawing?
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Psychic Landscapes

A Place for All the Grief to Go by Angely Mercado

1. Angely Mercado struggled to navigate loss and grief during quarantine, reminding many of the realities of the pandemic. What do you think we have learned, as a collective group, about the losses we have experienced from COVID-19?
2. How did you stay in touch with family members during quarantine? Did you need to get creative with your virtual visits? Did you meet with friends or family in a park? Write about an instance where you finally got together with people from outside your household. What emotions do you remember feeling that day?

On the Front Lines of Crisis by Laura Bliss

1. What did you learn about the US healthcare system during the pandemic? What questions do you have?
2. Do you know any frontline workers? Using what you've learned so far in *The Quarantine Atlas*, interview them! Write a list of questions and schedule a time to interview a frontline worker. What did you learn from hearing their story about working through quarantine and the pandemic?
3. If you don't know where to start, consider asking them this question from page 142: How will the lives of these workers be permanently changed by COVID, and what about their relationships to the places they work?
4. Describe your school experience during quarantine and the pandemic. How long was your school virtual? When were you allowed back into the building? How did you feel about virtual school? How do you think your teachers felt about online learning?
5. Based on your learning styles and experience, what is the "ideal" school experience for you? Would you choose to attend school 100% virtual or prefer to be in-person? What has this experience taught you about yourself?
6. Explore the maps from pages 143-171 and read about each illustrator. Which map was your favorite? What did you learn about their quarantine experience?

7. On page 160, Jane Sullivan says, “I never thought I would be longing for a simple thing like meeting a friend for coffee in a restaurant. In the future, I hope I can still feel appreciation for the little things the way I do now.” Write a list of all the things you appreciate that you might have taken for granted before the pandemic.
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Social Change

The Pandemic Made Me an Un-Urban Planner by Dr. Destiny Thomas

1. What is *redlining*? Have you heard this term before? Research the meaning of this word and how it affects communities in the United States today.
2. **Educators:** [Here is a helpful resource](#)⁶ for navigating this topic with your students.
3. What is *territorialism*? Many definitions provide a historical context, but what can you infer from Dr. Thomas’ essay about this term? What have you learned from reading her perspective as an urban planner during lockdown and a time of social unrest?
4. Explore the maps from pages 180–191 and read about each illustrator. Which map was your favorite? What did you learn about this specific grouping, especially from contributors from other countries? What questions do you have about the political systems throughout the world?
5. J. Kevin Byrne’s map on page 180 explores the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on May 25, 2020. What do you remember seeing and hearing about this event? What was your reaction?
6. There are many different kinds of maps. To better understand J. Kevin Byrne’s map, explore the maps and their uses from [Here360](#)⁷. After studying the illustration on page 180, what kind of map would his be?

⁶ <https://www.thoughtco.com/redlining-definition-4157858>

⁷ <https://360.here.com/2015/11/27/the-five-different-types-of-map-and-their-uses/>

7. For high school students and teachers: Take a look at this piece from [The New York Times](#)⁸ — choose two of the included questions to discuss as a group or as a whole-class activity. Then, answer the following questions independently:
 - a. Do you think that anything will change — either locally in Minneapolis or nationally — as a result of the protests? Why or why not?
 - b. What questions do you still have? What concerns are on your mind?
 8. Explore Walee Phiriyaphongsak’s map on pages 190–191. How would you reimagine the world post-pandemic? Consider this article from [Conservation International](#)⁹. Do you remember learning about the environmental impacts of the pandemic?
 9. Read through the article with a partner. Write down five things you want to know more about and brainstorm ways YOU can help the environment!
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Afterword: A Tiny Newborn World by Jessica Lee Martin

1. Editor of Bloomberg CityLab’s quarantine mapping project, Jessica Lee Martin, describes what she learned reading through hundreds of submissions: “This cartographic collection tells the story that, despite the differences and distances that were so profound in this time, our experiences born in this era will forever connect us. We all have our own maps printed inside our hearts and minds.” Consider her statement — how do you think COVID-19 connected us?
2. In many instances throughout our lives, we are defined by the “before and after” moments. What was your life like before the pandemic, and what has it been like after? What have you learned from living through a global pandemic?
3. Many people have said, “I hope we don’t go back to the way things were before the pandemic.” What do they mean? What don’t you want to return to in a post-pandemic world?

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<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/01/learning/what-is-your-reaction-to-the-days-of-protest-that-have-followed-the-death-of-george-floyd.html>

⁹ <https://www.conservation.org/stories/impact-of-covid-19-on-nature>

Final activity

Create your own Quarantine Atlas. Create a map that details your pandemic experience. If you need help brainstorming, here are some questions to think about:

1. How has the pandemic reshaped your home, communities, and everyday spaces?
2. Looking back, what were the positive things that came out of quarantine and the pandemic for you and your family? What were the negative things?
3. What lessons did you learn during this time?
4. Where, or with whom, did you find yourself that you weren't one or two years ago?
5. When reflecting on these pandemic years, make notes about the feelings and memories that come up, be they resilience or indifference, awe or despair. What events, good or bad, shaped your year?
6. After exploring the maps of dozens of others from around the world, what did you discover? Go back and see where each contributing writer is from — what are a few things their stories have in common, even if they live in different countries?
7. How has the pandemic affected the places you know, whether real or imagined?

When you're finished with your map and your essay, share your map and your story with Bloomberg CityLab [here](#)¹⁰.

¹⁰ [bloomberg.com/citylab-covid-maps](https://www.bloomberg.com/citylab-covid-maps)

Common Core State Standards

English/Language Arts - Writing Grades 6-8

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.2, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.7, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.7, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.7

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.8, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.8, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.8

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.9, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.9, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.9

English/Language Arts - Writing Grades 9-12

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.6, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.6

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.7, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.7

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.8, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.8

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9

History/Social Studies Grades 6-8

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.9

History/Social Studies Grades 9-10

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.7

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9

History/Social Studies Grades 11-12

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.4

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.6

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.8

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9