

TIME CAPSULE

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Dear Lalith,

Greetings from summer 2020. This new decade has started unlike any other year than you or I have seen in our lifetimes! It has, so far, been dominated by an infection caused by a virus called coronavirus. I need to tell you a bit more about coronavirus so you can understand how this virus has affected my life and the lives of everyone in the world. You may be surprised to hear that I am a doctor who looks after children, and I work in the accident and emergency (A&E) department of a children's hospital. The hospital is located in a city in north-west England called Liverpool, which is the where The Beatles (remember the songs called Yesterday, Yellow Submarine, and Michelle?) came from.

Coronavirus is an infection which has swept across the world, infecting millions of people from Asia right through to South America. Remember reading about the plague in Primary 3? Remember the story behind the ring-a-ring-'o-roses song? A-tishoo! A-tishoo! Then they all fall down dead? Coronavirus is a disease caused by a virus which seems to be having similar effects on the human race as the plague did all those years ago. Perhaps a new nursery rhyme will have to be composed to remind us of coronavirus!

The virus is spread between people through tiny water droplets from our noses (snot) and throats (spit) when we cough or sneeze. It could also be passed on when we touch certain things, get the virus on our hands/fingers, and then touch our eyes, nose, or mouth. You know what it is like when you are in primary school – someone always has a cough or snotty nose! You also already know that it is quite easy to spread germs between your classmates, and then also to our own families at home. Coronavirus can be passed on between people as easily as those germs that cause colds.

Most of the time, coronavirus can make humans feel unwell with a fever, cough, and achy muscles. Unfortunately, sometimes the virus can make some people a lot sicker, and in some cases die. Coronavirus can really damage lungs, and may lead to a person becoming very sick and need a machine to help them breathe. It can be much more serious virus than a simple sore throat and runny nose virus. I know you have already had a lot of colds in your life so far, but coronavirus is more powerful than that.