India's COVID Nightmare

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TO THE TEACHER

WHAT IN THE WORLD?
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Hay’skw’qa!
LesPlan is grateful to the Lkwungen Peoples, the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, on whose unceded land we now live, and do our work.

We welcome your comments and appreciate your suggestions. Please contact us at any time.

MISSION STATEMENT
LesPlan Educational Services Ltd. aims to help teachers develop students’ engagement in, understanding of, and ability to critically assess current issues and events by providing quality, up-to-date, affordable, ready-to-use resources appropriate for use across the curriculum.

I have had many parents comment to me about how great they think What in the World? is, and they look forward to each month’s issue coming home... This is a great resource for a small country school to explore the global issues that affect us all.

K. Camelon, Grade 7/8 teacher
Admaston, ON

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1. Write the title of the article on the board: "India’s COVID Nightmare - The Crisis Tragically Escalates." Ask students to consider the title and brainstorm what it suggests. (For example, many COVID cases, many deaths, lack of resources, etc.) Have the class share ideas aloud.

2. Next, have students view the news report found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zcSjn_MjUwg [2:39] with no sound. As they watch, have half the students pay attention to the text and half to the images. Invite students to share their observations with the class. (Examples of text observations: 300K cases for 11th straight day, scientists say the government ignored warnings, science was not taken into account to drive policy, etc.; Examples of images observations: funeral pyres burning constantly, people carrying oxygen tanks, patients laying on the floor of a hospital, bodies wrapped in sheets, airplanes arriving with supplies, citizens being vaccinated, etc.)

3. Watch the report a second time, this time with sound. After viewing the report, invite students to share any new information they learned from the soundtrack. (Examples of soundtrack observations: bodies taken to parking lots, the world’s worst coronavirus surge, people dying after having one jab, new variant, botched response from government, 3000 lives lost each day, India was surprised by this surge, the United States has promised to send vaccine, India is the world’s largest producer of vaccine, etc.)

4. Finally, invite students to set a purpose for reading the article, referring to the resource page Setting A Purpose Before Reading as needed.
New Delhi is the capital of India. A terrible scene is playing out in this city of 31 million.

Here, large groups of people in protective gear watch as huge funeral pyres burn non-stop. The fires are cremating the remains of thousands of New Delhi citizens who are dying of COVID-19 every day.

Similar solemn rituals are taking place throughout this nation of nearly 1.4 billion. Worse, they are happening with increasing speed and frequency.

**Supply shortages**

That's partly because most COVID patients in India aren't able to get the care they need.

India spends just 1.3 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) on healthcare. Canada spends 11.5 percent of its GDP for the same purpose. This low funding means that there is just one doctor for every 1456 people in India. In Canada, by contrast, there are nearly three physicians for every 1000 of us.

Also, there aren't enough hospital beds for all of the patients needing help. Making matters worse, hospitals have run out of basic medical supplies. There is not even enough oxygen to help those struggling to breathe.

**A surge in cases**

In the spring of 2021, nations around the globe were coping with new waves of the COVID-19 pandemic. They were doing so with varying degrees of success. Nations with high vaccination rates seemed to be gaining control over the deadly virus. They include Singapore, the United Kingdom, and Israel. Others, like Canada, were struggling. They raced to vaccinate their citizens before COVID-19 variants overtook efforts to keep the spread of the disease under control.

But conditions in India are truly dire. Cases started surging in April. By early May, over 400,000 new ones were being reported every day, breaking global records. By mid-May, over 24 million people were infected. Over 270,000 had died.

Those are shocking statistics – yet experts fear that the actual...
numbers are much higher. The reason? Only about 34 percent of deaths are occurring in hospitals and clinics. So deaths at home or elsewhere are being missed.

**FALSE CONFIDENCE**

Yet just one month earlier, daily cases in the nation had dropped sharply. They were down nearly 90 percent from the peak of the first wave of the pandemic in September 2020. What went so terribly wrong this spring?

Observers say India’s second COVID wave caught people by surprise.

In March 2020, when the pandemic began, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had ordered a complete three-week lockdown. It was the toughest on the planet, and the effort paid off. By November 2020, India had only 10 percent of COVID deaths worldwide. Yet it has the world’s second-largest population. The U.S., with the world’s third-largest population, had nearly 25 percent of all deaths.

Then, in January 2021, the Indian government rolled out a massive vaccination drive. That also boosted hopes that India was getting over the pandemic. So citizens eased up on social distancing, handwashing, and mask-wearing. Stores opened without restrictions. Crowds were free to gather.

**SUPERSPREADER EVENTS**

Unfortunately, India’s vaccination drive got off to a slow start. There were supply issues and some **vaccine hesitancy**. So, by early May, only two percent of the population had been fully immunized. That meant most people were still vulnerable to the disease.

Add to that, a religious festival called Kumbh Mela was held in India throughout the winter and spring. For the occasion, **observant** Hindus gather in the northern city of Haridwar to wash away their sins in the Ganges River.

About 9 million people travelled to Haridwar this year. Some 6 million arrived in April, just when COVID-19 was escalating. Yet the government chose not to postpone the event. One official declared that “faith in God will overcome the fear of the virus.” But others had deep concerns.

“Festivals like the Kumbh that involve bathing and [communal] eating and living conditions are dangerous for spreading this deadly illness,” said one expert.

Election campaigns held in some states also drew large crowds.

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**DEFINITIONS**

**Commodity**: something or someone that is useful or valued

**Observant**: careful to follow religious teachings or customs

**Vaccine hesitancy**: a reluctance to be vaccinated, usually because of misplaced fear or mistrust of vaccines

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**DID YOU KNOW?**

India is the world’s largest maker of coronavirus vaccines. Until mid-April, it had been shipping supplies of the precious **commodity** around the globe. That has stopped as it tries to deal with the huge demand for the shots at home. Poor nations that were counting on India to export vaccines could face severe spikes in COVID-19 as a result.

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**A LEADER FACES ANGER**

Many Indians blame Prime Minister Modi and his party for handling the COVID crisis.

“People are angry. Families of COVID patients [ask]: ‘Where is the government? What is it doing,’” said one observer. “Why haven’t the military and disaster response teams been pulled in to build field hospitals?”

Now, India is scrambling to find more oxygen sources. Nations that are able to share are sending medical supplies and equipment. Canada has pledged $10 million. We have also sent 350 ventilators and crucial COVID medicines.

“Canada stands with the people of India as they go through these difficult times,” said Minister of International Development Karina Gould. ★
INDIA'S COVID NIGHTMARE
– The Crisis Tragically Escalates

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. How many people live in India? Explain how poverty has affected this country.

2. How does India's healthcare system compare to Canada’s? Explain.

3. How did India manage the first wave of the pandemic? Explain.

4. How did the Indian government and citizens respond after the first wave of the pandemic had passed?

5. List at least two other reasons why the second pandemic wave has been so destructive.

6. How many COVID cases were reported in India in May?

7. How has the current crisis in India affected the distribution of vaccines from India to other countries?
QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT

1. Some countries, including Canada, have begun sending help and supplies to India. As you see it, what is the responsibility of wealthier nations to help poorer countries struggling to deal with the pandemic? Give reasons to support your ideas.

                                                                                                                                   
                                                                                                                                   
                                                                                                                                   
                                                                                                                                   
                                                                                                                                   
                                                                                                                                   

2. The governments of many countries have been criticized for their response to the pandemic. Some citizens say that measures have been too strict; others argue that measures haven't been strict enough. As you see it, what priorities do governments need to consider when making decisions about how to respond to the pandemic? Give reasons to support your ideas.

                                                                                                                                   
                                                                                                                                   
                                                                                                                                   
                                                                                                                                   
                                                                                                                                   
                                                                                                                                   

3. How might you use the information about the current situation in India to influence someone who chooses not to follow COVID health guidelines? What questions might you ask to better understand their perspective? Explain.

                                                                                                                                   
                                                                                                                                   
                                                                                                                                   
                                                                                                                                   
                                                                                                                                   
                                                                                                                                   


The article discusses the potential spread of COVID-19 that may have occurred during the gathering of millions of observant Hindus during the religious festival Kumbh Mela. Along with religious gatherings, large sporting events in India and other countries have been the subject of debates. On one side, there are those who defend personal freedoms and the need for spiritual supports and social diversions; on the other are those who defend the need to protect public health and safety from the effects of the coronavirus.

Visit any of the links below to learn more about these hot topics. Choose one topic and identify the concerns of both sides of the debate. With which side do you agree? Explain.

Kumbh Mela
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TxlewZvELE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TxlewZvELE) [8:37]
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5bk575y-iQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5bk575y-iQ) [2:43]

Premier League Cricket in India
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_hm-z8-B-YQ&t=4s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_hm-z8-B-YQ&t=4s) [3:17]

Tokyo Olympic Games
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mCbg6sTfV0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mCbg6sTfV0) [2:22]

IIHF Women’s Hockey tournament cancelled
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fzjpyY4BOA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fzjpyY4BOA) [4:48]

Churches in Manitoba challenge coronavirus restrictions
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hootNCkymY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hootNCkymY) [2:20]
YOUR TASK:

Examine the editorial cartoon, then answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper:

1. What do you already know about the impact COVID is having in different countries around the world?

2. Describe what you see and read in the cartoon.

3. Why do you suppose the oxygen tank has one end labelled 'North' and the other labelled 'South'?

4. As you see it, what might the cartoonist be saying about the impact COVID is having on countries around the world? Explain.

5. For what reasons do you agree with the cartoonist’s perspective? For what reasons do you disagree? ★
The saying *A picture is worth a thousand words* refers to the idea that complex stories can be described with a single, still image. By examining the content of photographs viewers can often, at a glance, ‘see’ who was involved, what happened and perhaps even determine where and when the event happened. Careful consideration of the less obvious details is equally important as they give additional clues that can be used to infer more about what is going on in the photograph. For example, tears rolling down a young girl’s cheek show how upset she is or wet streets help explain why the driving conditions were more dangerous.

**Directions:** First, label everything you see in the photograph. Be specific. Include obvious and less obvious details. For example, if there is a person in the photo, label everything you see on him or her, such as *facial features* (blue eyes, crooked nose, toothless smile, graying hair); *clothing* (torn black pants, rubber boots, plaid, long-sleeved shirt); *actions* (sitting, holding a puppy); *surroundings* (street, sidewalk, bench, trees, grass). If you do this thoroughly, the photograph will be covered with words.

Then, write the ‘1000 word’ story told by the photograph using as many of the labeled words as you can. The completed story should be accurate (*facts are consistent with what is shown in the photograph and with what is known outside the photograph*), complete (*reports the important 5W’s + H*) and clear (*well-written, free from errors*).
Devotees take holy dips in the Ganges River during Kumbh Mela, or pitcher festival, one of the most sacred pilgrimages in Hinduism, in Haridwar, northern state of Uttarakhand, India on April 12, 2021. (AP Photo/Karma Sonam)
**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Complete the table below to show the current number of coronavirus cases for the five countries listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COVID-19</th>
<th>May 1</th>
<th>July 1</th>
<th>Sept. 1</th>
<th>Nov. 1</th>
<th>Jan. 1</th>
<th>Mar. 1</th>
<th>May 1</th>
<th>Current</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S. (blue)</td>
<td>1,035,400</td>
<td>2,573,400</td>
<td>5,936,600</td>
<td>8,952,100</td>
<td>19,578,200</td>
<td>28,244,600</td>
<td>31,948,800</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India (green)</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>585,500</td>
<td>3,691,200</td>
<td>8,184,100</td>
<td>10,286,700</td>
<td>11,112,200</td>
<td>19,165,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil (orange)</td>
<td>78,200</td>
<td>1,368,100</td>
<td>3,862,300</td>
<td>5,516,700</td>
<td>7,619,200</td>
<td>10,517,200</td>
<td>14,590,700</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France (purple)</td>
<td>128,100</td>
<td>157,200</td>
<td>265,000</td>
<td>1,331,800</td>
<td>2,576,400</td>
<td>3,690,400</td>
<td>5,529,800</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey (red)</td>
<td>120,200</td>
<td>199,900</td>
<td>514,000</td>
<td>1,021,400</td>
<td>2,208,600</td>
<td>2,701,700</td>
<td>4,820,600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Use the table above to plot a line graph. Draw a line for each country using the colour indicated to show the number of coronavirus cases on the eight specified dates.

3. Complete your graph with a proper title.

4. After completing your graph, what observations can you make and what conclusions can you draw?

5. What predictions can you make about the number of cases going forward? Give reasons to support your predictions.
Complete this map assignment to better understand the article COVID in India.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Obtain the required resources and read all the instructions before starting.
2. Colour your map after all labelling is completed.
3. Print in pencil only first, then go over the printing in black ink.
4. Work carefully and neatly.

**Resources Required:** pencil, black pen, pencil crayons, ruler, eraser and an atlas.

**Part A** Locate and label India in CAPITAL letters and shade this country green.

**Part B** Locate and label the capital of India and underline this city name.

**Part C** Locate and label the following island groups:
- Andaman Islands (India)
- Nicobar Islands (India)

**Part D** Locate and label the following countries in CAPITAL letters and shade each as indicated:
- Afghanistan (red)
- Pakistan (orange)
- Nepal (purple)
- Myanmar [Burma]* (yellow)
- Sri Lanka (yellow)

**Part E** Locate and label the capital of each country and underline each city name.

**Part F** Locate and label the following countries in CAPITAL letters and shade each as indicated:
- Iran (brown)
- China (pink)
- Bhutan (orange)
- Bangladesh (red)
- Thailand (purple)
- Maldives

**Part G** Locate and label the following cities:
- Mumbai (Bombay)
- Delhi
- Bangalore

**Part H** Locate and label the following rivers and shade each one light blue:
- Indus
- Ganges
- Brahmaputra

**Part I** Locate and label the following and shade all ocean water dark blue.
- Arabian Sea
- Gulf of Khambhat
- Bay of Bengal
- Andaman Sea

**Part J** Locate and label the Tropic of Cancer (23° N).

**Part K** Shade all remaining territory grey.

**Part L** Complete your map with a frame, title and compass.

*Note: Since 1989 authorities in Burma have promoted the name ‘Myanmar’. The country is known as either Myanmar or Burma.
PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

A. Write the letter that corresponds to the best answer on the line beside each question:

_____ 1. What is the population of India?
   a) 340 million  b) 765 million
   c) 1.1 billion  d) 1.4 billion

_____ 2. Why was India so successful in fighting off the first COVID wave?
   a) travel in and out of India was restricted
   b) the vaccination program achieved herd immunity
   c) the entire country shut down for three weeks
   d) all religious festivals and political events were cancelled

_____ 3. What did many Indian hospitals run out of to treat COVID and other patients?
   a) stretcher beds  b) pain killers
   c) oxygen  d) vaccines

B. Mark the statements T (True) or F (False). If a statement is True, write one important fact to support it on the line below. If a statement is False, write the words that make it true on the line below.

_____ 4. True or False? India has three doctors for every 1000 people in the country.

_____ 5. True or False? India has now stopped exporting vaccines.

_____ 6. True or False? The government of India invests heavily in its healthcare system.

C. Fill in the blanks to complete each sentence.

7. Two-thirds of India's population lives in ________________________ .

8. Kumbh Mela participants wade into the ________________________ River to wash away their sins.

9. Prime Minister Narendra ________________________ is the leader of India.

D. Respond to the following question in paragraph form. (Use a separate sheet of paper if necessary.)

10. As you see it, what can Canada learn from the COVID situation in India? Give reasons to support your response.
There are a number of reasons we read, and setting a purpose for reading – knowing WHY we are reading – helps us to focus on important information and to better understand and remember what we read. It also helps us decide HOW we will read the text.

We don’t read all texts for the same purposes or in the same way. For example, we read an instruction manual for a new Blu-ray player for a different reason than we read a book or a website. How we will read it – the strategies we use – will also differ. We are more likely to skim to find the information we need in a manual. Once we find what we need, we might read the instructions carefully to figure out what to do. Then, we stop reading, put the manual down, and carry out the steps. We may have to reread if we get confused or forget what to do.

This is a very different approach than the one we would use to read a book. When we read a book, we usually read cover-to-cover. We read carefully so we don’t miss any details because we want to understand the whole story. Sometimes we make connections or create images in our minds as we read to help us better understand what we are reading. Depending on its length, we may put the book down before we finish reading it but we will start reading where we left off.

Good readers are flexible and responsive. This means that they match their reading strategies to their purpose for reading. What types of text do you read? Why do you read them? What strategies do you use to read each of these texts? The chart below is a summary of the main purposes for reading and what each entails.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose for reading</th>
<th>What it looks like</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For enjoyment</td>
<td>Usually student-selected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allows students to choose a variety of genres and forms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allows students to pursue what interests them while developing reading skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To experience something new</td>
<td>Students make connections between their personal experiences and those of people around the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To learn more about themselves and others</td>
<td>Students reflect on what they’ve read and express opinions and perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students develop a sense of their personal values and make sense of the world around them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To gain information</td>
<td>Students use the features of informational texts to gather, analyse and apply what they’ve learned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To understand issues</td>
<td>Students develop a sense of perspective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students pose questions, acknowledge other points of view, critique the opinions presented and support opinions with evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To appreciate writing</td>
<td>Students respond to text in ways other than written answers to apply what they’ve learned in new contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To appreciate use of media to communicate</td>
<td>Students respond to a variety of media formats (e.g., infographics, political cartoons, videos, etc.) and react to how the format supports the meaning of the message.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Chart adapted from: A Guide to Effective Literacy Instruction, Grades 4-6, p. 11.
Students want to know what’s happening in their world – but the news can be difficult and time-consuming to teach.

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B. Thibodeau, Saskatoon, SK

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D. Faerber, Pembroke, ON

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