

“Domination of Face Masks in 2020”

March 2020 - Present

Housed in Washington D.C.

2020 is a year that will be remembered throughout history for a multitude of reasons. From human rights movements to presidential elections to a widespread pandemic, 2020 has seen it all. Things that have happened in this year have been unprecedented for most of the world’s current population. COVID-19 has changed the lives of so many individuals and families, but also just the way that humans live today. Prior to 2020, face masks were rarely seen out in public, but in today’s day and age it feels weird to see someone at the grocery store without one. Whether or not masks become a future practice for the rest of time, they have definitely impacted lives in 2020.

Face masks are used as source control. By wearing a face mask, people are preventing their germs from spreading to others and if everyone wears masks, the spread of COVID-19 can be slowed and eventually stopped. Face masks are recommended by the CDC to be worn in public settings and in situations where individuals will be in closer proximity to others. The type of face mask an individual wears is up to their discretion. Many health organizations, including the WHO and CDC, have presented recommended guidelines for what people should look for in a face mask. Fabric masks are beneficial for citizens out in public, but these masks should not be worn in healthcare settings. Ideally, these masks should have three layers: inside, middle, and outer. Other masks can be used, but the more layers there are the more protected individuals will be. Neck gaiters, for example, have become a topic of controversy over whether they are beneficial since they are only one thin layer. While they are not the best face mask for prevention, they can still be used.



The United States in particular has failed to contain the virus as cases continue to rise and individuals are dying from the disease on a daily basis. Due to the emphasis of individualism within the country, government restrictions are harder to enforce. Since the president refused to wear a mask in the beginning of the pandemic, supporters of Donald Trump refused to wear masks because they believed it was taking away their freedoms.



The lack of separation between politicians and public health officials has led to a politicization of wearing face masks and divided America between those who will listen to science and those who will simply follow a politician's words.

Advertising has shifted throughout the pandemic as well, resulting in magazines and commercials including mask wearing in their advertisements. Popular magazines have started to involve models wearing masks on the covers to normalize their use and emphasize the importance of mask-wearing. Companies are using commercials to promote their products during the pandemic by showing individuals wearing masks and expressing the importance of their products during the days of mask-wearing. Since masks have become so prevalent in human lives, companies are getting in on the profits they can make during this unprecedented time.



My archive would include the following for the initial stages of collection:

- Masks of different styles and materials
 - Bandanas
 - Homemade cloth masks
 - Masks made from t-shirts
 - Masks with a filter
 - Neck gaiters
 - Disposable surgical masks
 - N95s
- Advice on face masks
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XEhPyZX7WiA>
- Instructions for how to make homemade masks
 - Written (poster or blogpost format)
 - YouTube videos
- Magazines
 - Vogue Portugal April 2020
 - SELF magazine August 2020
- Commercials
 - Walmart “Back to School” 2020
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MU66mvIXV68&feature=youtu.be>
 - Domino’s “Carside Delivery” 2020
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrYu3q2kH8o&feature=emb_logo

- Ice Breakers Mints “#MaskBreath? It’s Real.”
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yXU7JFKaSJQ&feature=emb_logo
- Politicization of face masks
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Za6JtPhscxE>
 - Webpages
 - Facebook posts
 - Tiktok videos
 - News and magazine clippings

This material should be housed together in Washington D.C. as it represents the issues that all Americans have gone through during the months of 2020. Storing the archive in the nation’s capital is proving that Americans are going through a tough period in all of their lives and it has affected each and every one of us.

This archive is important to me and all of society at this point because COVID-19 is something that has affected each and every one of us. Whether or not we were personally affected by it, chances are we know someone who was. The virus has changed the way we have lived and this period of time will definitely be something that I will tell my future children and grandchildren about some day. This all started in the middle of my senior year of high school and there are some experiences I will never get to experience the way I imagined. In March, I thought it would be contained enough by the fall where I would at least be able to experience my freshman year of college. While these may seem to be miniscule reasons for how the virus has affected me, archiving the story of masks in 2020 and how they changed individuals’ lives will definitely be something of importance. Since this is a situation that is currently ongoing, my archive will start out as a relatively small amount of material but I believe that it will continue to grow as long as COVID-19 manages to spread.

Images:

“How to Wear a Non-Medical Fabric Mask Safely”

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks>

“My Body, My Choice”

<https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/covid-19-mask-mandates-wisconsin-elsewhere-spark-my-body-my-ncna1235535>

Self Magazine “Mask On”

<https://models.com/work/self-magazine-aug-2020-digital>