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# Voltage

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Science Park High School

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*Author's Note:  
Information may  
have changed since  
written.  
Information about  
coronavirus,  
infection rates,  
and vaccines can  
be found on the  
CDC website.*

## **VACCINE DISTRIBUTION**

**BY: Ashley Lourenco**

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the light at the end of the tunnel was always an eventual vaccine. However, as we see doses being developed

and distributed, public reaction has been mixed.

According to the CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention), the three authorized coronavirus vaccines are Moderna, Pfizer-BioNTech,





and Johnson&Johnson. There have been massive rollouts of doses being widely talked about. In the early stages, there was backlash about mishandling of the vaccines. Certain types, like the Moderna Vaccine, have specific temperature

requirements to stay fresh and effective. Shipment and distribution proved unable to abide by these guidelines, causing mass amounts of doses to go to waste. More recently, variants of COVID-19 have been popping up all over the world, contributing to wide speculation about the

effectiveness of vaccines to combat all strains. Dr. Anthony Fauci addressed these claims with empirical faith in the vaccine. It seems that the general consensus among those in the medical field is that herd immunity with a majority of the population vaccinated is the best method for preventing these new strains and obstacles.

In many interviews, the official timeline for who gets vaccinated when is, well, nonexistent. A rough estimate voiced by

President Biden is that by July 2021, general coronavirus vaccines will be available to non-risk adults with over 600 million doses. This has caused a shift in how states roll out vaccines. Many governors supported it and are now looking for a change in distribution to meet guidelines similar to what the Biden Administration has produced. Some allow all adults to become vaccinated, some are shuffling who gets vaccinated first, most trying to accomplish major things by May 1st. A pattern in



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prioritization seems to sturdily be keeping the public accurately informed and helping out vulnerable populations.

## **NEWARK SCIENCE PARK DEBATE TEAM**

**BY: Victoria Rengel &  
Ashley Lourenco**



L-R: Adegoke Fakorede, Sunhee Simon, Amit Kukreja, Christian Quiroz

## **What is Debate?**

Debate is an academic activity designed to have students engage in critical thinking and public speaking. There are different events and styles of debate.



Image Credits - Ed Murray  
Amit and Christian



Some mimic different parts of government.

Students engage in research from articles to high theory literature. This is different from what some might imagine debate to be. The reality of debate is that it includes

speaking at around 400 words per minute, strange jargon, an oddly specific form of evidence, and unique types of arguments linking the slightest thing to extinction. It can be overwhelming at first, but the experience you get from being a part of a debate team is

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unlike any other. Science's team offers many travel opportunities to those invested.

## Styles of Debate

The Newark Science Debate Team offers a few types of debate. First, Policy Debate. This is a 2 vs. 2 format, where both teams roleplay as policymakers.

The 2020-21 Policy Debate resolution (topic) is about criminal justice reform. The topic stays the same all school year. Students can engage in conversations about



L-R: Adegoke Fakorede, Christian Quiroz, Amit Kukreja, SunHee Simon

everything from social justice to nuclear war. Science also offers Lincoln Douglas Debate. This style maintains a 1 vs. 1 format with 3 speeches for the affirmative and 2 for the negative. In this event, it is mainly

philosophical. LD topics change every 2 months. The team plans to incorporate different types of debate in the coming years to expand what it does. Students learn general knowledge about topics and niche things.



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## What do you do? (Meetings, Tournaments, etc.)

We meet three times a week typically, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 3-6 PM. All levels of commitment are welcome. Whether

you want to research, simply help out, or be the best in the country - all are welcome and achievable. Tournaments are usually on Saturdays; however, the ones on the National Circuit

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can be from Friday to late Monday.

### **Do I have to pay to be on the team?**

Nope, not at all! Travel expenses are covered via school funding. Science prides itself on making debate a more accessible activity to all. Fun fact- when all is well concerning COVID the team travels all over the country, from Atlanta to San Diego!

### **Newark Science Success**

There are many examples of Newark Science debaters doing very well on a national



level in both high school and college. Some recent examples are Brianna Aaron, Sunhee Simon, Amit Kukreja, David Asafu-Ajaye, and Victor Monterossa. These alumni performed incredibly well. Some were even on the national circuit

and even qualified for a prestigious event called the Tournament of Champions. All of them agree that debate takes lots of research and dedication, but the experience and community is what makes it worth it.



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### **Academic benefits**

Debate is a very educational activity. Firstly, debate requires you to have very nuanced in-depth discussions about pressing topics. This goes for any type of debate,

from Policy to Lincoln-Douglas to Public Forum. So your knowledge level will definitely expand. You will learn about public policy, international relations, domestic affairs, to even

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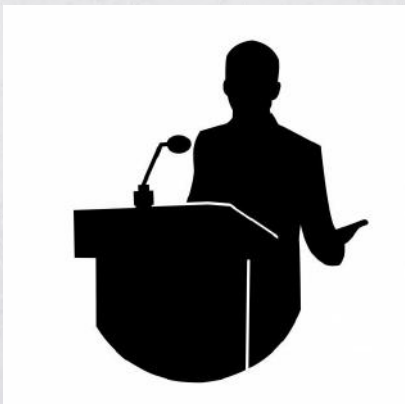
reading critical literature from the likes of Karl Marx, Agamben, Dylan Rodriguez, and (a school favorite) Tommy Curry. Secondly, debate requires research skills. In order to succeed, you learn to be efficient at finding credible sources whilst doing in-depth research. This comes in handy when writing that History paper you have been pushing back for the last minute.

Debate rounds are typically around an hour, in this time you must formulate good arguments and fast. Repeatedly doing



this causes great critical thinking skills that can be applied to anything - whether you are a poli-sci major to pre-med. In debate we learn to be very persuasive and loud. This leads us to have great public speaking skills. The team has great

resources, from philosophers, to policy makers -- you will definitely be able to learn how to and achieve great things. You are trained to have analytical skills under high pressure environments. It's incredible what debaters can do!



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## The Biden-Harris Administration's 100 Days

BY: Victoria Rengel

### What is the significance of the first 100 days?

The first 100 days make or break a president.

Whatever is done in these days will be remembered forever; it's basically a first impression of sorts.

It sets the tone for the next term or even 8 years. The average American will not remember what was passed in the 578th day, but that person will remember the first 100.



### When did this "tradition" start?

This started when Franklin D. Roosevelt was in office. Along with the 73rd Congress he was able to pass 15 pieces of legislation and 76 laws. Although some may argue that this standard is unfair as certain processes may change, and the political climate for

each candidate is substantially different.

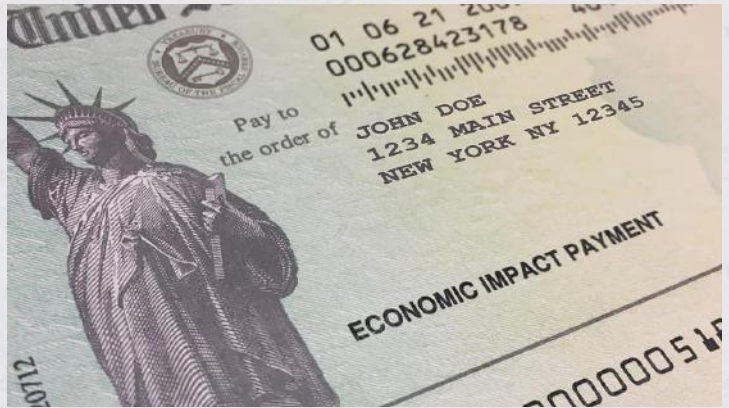
### What Executive Orders has Biden signed in these days?

*List taken directly from "All of President Biden's key executive orders — in one chart" at Market Watch by Victor Reklaitis and Robert Schroeder.*



- Re-engage with World Health Organization;
- Create position of COVID-19 response coordinator;
- Rejoin Paris climate agreement;
- Revoke permit for Keystone XL pipeline, pause energy leasing in ANWR;
- Ask agencies to extend eviction moratoriums;

- Ask Education Dept. to extend student-loan pause;
- Launch an initiative to advance racial equity, end "1776 Commission";
- Revoke order that aims to exclude undocumented immigrants from census;
- Preserve/fortify DACA, which helps "Dreamers";
- Require masks and distancing on all federal property and by federal workers...AND MORE.



### What major pieces of legislation have been passed?

- American Rescue Plan

This was a Coronavirus aid package. It included everything from direct payments to increased vaccination centers, etc.

### Were these 100 Days successful?

Well that is for you to decide! In these days, Biden prioritized revoking Trump's Executive Orders, focusing on climate change, COVID Relief and vaccinations. Critics argue that Biden did not hold up



his bargain to enact Criminal Justice Reform while others say he went too far. Something that everyone not only in D.C. but in the country seems to agree on is the efficiency of the vaccine rollout.

Now let's see what else is accomplished in the next four years.





# The Pandemic's Social and Environmental Impact

BY: Angie Moya

This past year, we have seen a plethora of changes to several aspects of our society, including our daily practices and our environment.

Our environment includes social and physical factors that affect us as individuals, and our community.

We have learned to adapt to the pandemic's challenges and how we learn, work, and socialize is now very different.

However, many of the effects of these changes deserve more attention.



## Education

The education system has seen some of the most drastic changes, as students and teachers have had to turn their bedrooms and living spaces into personal classrooms and have had to maintain a (mainly) virtual existence. For some students, this has been a much more comfortable way of learning, while others have felt disconnected.

Many schools have cut days shorter and have tried to implement help for students in the form of office hours, tutoring, breaks, and meetings to help students overcome their school challenges.

Yet, there are many concerns over increasing mental health issues in children and adults, and virtual learning may be contributing to it. It has become much more difficult for students today to stay motivated and attentive in class, and the new daily routine tends to feel monotonous and stressful.

Online learning has made it easier for assignments to pile up, for students to lose interest, and for there to be less interaction.

Overall, the classes don't feel as 'human' as before. This can lead to students (and teachers) feeling

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isolated, which can lead to an increase in anxiety, depression, stress, negative thoughts, and even sleep disruptions. The main group affected are young adults. For this reason, it is important to be mindful, and practice self-care on a regular basis, to lessen the stress from school.

As students, we can attest that using only technology isn't the most effective way to do school, and it has been somewhat of a detriment to our education and our emotions.

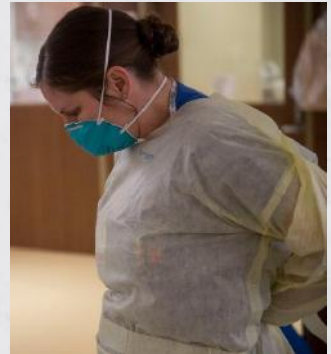
## Work

Many workers have suffered terribly this year. In fact, tens of millions of people have lost their jobs since the beginning of Covid. While many are still struggling to recover, most have resorted to filing for unemployment. Those who are still working, regardless of whether they are working remotely or in person, are experiencing a lot of

stress and anxiety, and are continuing to work under new regulations placed on them.

Also, the increased need of healthcare workers and first responders has placed them under a lot of pressure, and this has taken a major toll on their (and essentially

any worker's) mental health.



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## Health

Worldwide, COVID-19 has caused about 3.68 million deaths and many families have had to face the grief and sorrow of losing a loved one. Grief can affect our body, mind, emotions, and spirit, and can appear in many different forms including physical reactions and intense emotions.

Along with this, the influx of new information about the virus, has caused many to feel overwhelmed and stressed during this time. It is reported that more people are suffering from anxiety, depression,

and vast mental health issues.

Furthermore, the pandemic's shelter in place has led to unhealthy eating habits and weight gain in many individuals.

All these effects on our health serve as reminders that our health should be our #1 priority and we should devote more time to taking care of/protecting ourselves.



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## Nature & Wildlife

Throughout efforts to ensure health and safety, people have had to use personal protective equipment (PPE).



The increased usage has unfortunately also led to an increase in medical waste that cannot be recycled. This means more air, water, and soil pollution.



Considering PPE is made of plastic, it can take anywhere up to 500 years for plastic to decompose, and even then, they would have become microplastics which can pose a threat to wildlife. Perhaps, using a cloth mask is more sustainable.

**It is still crucial to keep yourself and others safe, so continue to take precautions and**

**follow COVID guidelines.**

However, there has also been a reduction in fossil fuel consumption, and a reduction in transport and industrial activities because more people have been staying at home.

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## Businesses

Many businesses have either closed down, or are struggling to survive in today's weakened market. Businesses big and small, have placed restrictions and provided a limited service as compared to before. However, some cities are beginning to allow more businesses to open back up.

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