

company

# The Coronavirus Time Capsule

A week-by-week response to the pandemic,  
through the eyes of teenagers everywhere.

A blueprint for youth theatres, schools and  
youth groups, created by Company Three.



**The Coronavirus Time Capsule is a free project that anyone can do, with any size group and on any timescale. You can adapt it in any way you like.**

## **Version 1.0 | 27 March 2020**

Created by Ned Glasier and Company Three  
Developed and distributed in partnership with Nick Hern Books

**Please share your work using the hashtag #CoronavirusTimeCapsule**

### **How to credit us**

This project is entirely free and there is no licence required. We would be grateful if you could include the following credit on any material related to this project.

**The Coronavirus Time Capsule is a project for groups of young people everywhere, created by Company Three. See [www.companythree.co.uk/coronavirus](http://www.companythree.co.uk/coronavirus)**

Company Three is supported by the Dame Alice Owen Foundation, the Cripplegate Foundation, Islington Council, the Tuixen Foundation, Henry Smith Charity, the Sumners Foundation and the Mercers' Charitable Foundation.

**[www.companythree.co.uk](http://www.companythree.co.uk) | [@company\\_three](https://twitter.com/company_three)**

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# About the project

**The Coronavirus Time Capsule is a new project by Company Three – a response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. We are doing it because we think it is essential that we continue to offer the teenagers we work with support, connection and a space to be creative.**

We have written this Blueprint as a free resource for other youth theatres, educational institutions, student drama groups, amateur companies and community-arts projects who have closed because of the coronavirus.

We are inviting groups everywhere to make their own video Time Capsule, an expression of what it is like to be a teenager during the pandemic.

This blueprint will set you up to start making a Time Capsule with your group – and every week we'll be producing online resources to inspire and generate content from them. You can use these, or create your own.

We want to use this opportunity to connect with groups working with young people at a time of global crisis. We hope by all doing the project together we will better support our group members and ensure that teenagers are heard during this emergency.

This project is intended for teenagers and all the materials and resources are designed for this age group. If, however, you're working with a different group of people, please feel free to adapt them in whatever way you like to suit their interests and needs.

**The Coronavirus Time Capsule is being developed and distributed in association with our publishing partner, Nick Hern Books, who also publish and license our play Brainstorm and its accompanying Blueprint: [www.nickhernbooks.co.uk/brainstorm](http://www.nickhernbooks.co.uk/brainstorm)**

## About Company Three

**Company Three is a theatre company of seventy-five young people led by a team of professional theatre-makers, based in Islington, North London, in the United Kingdom. We exist to give teenagers the space to tell their own stories and create their own change.**

During the pandemic, we are adapting our work in three key areas to make sure we continue to create a world in which teenagers are listened to, understood and celebrated.

We are **supporting our young people** through online meet-ups, phone check-ins and signposting to external support.

We are **making work that helps teenagers express themselves** by creating our own online Coronavirus Time Capsule.

We are **openly sharing our practice** by making this blueprint and the resources that support it.

Find out more about our work at [www.companythree.co.uk](http://www.companythree.co.uk)

**“A remarkable theatrical act of optimism by a bunch of funny, fearless and utterly engaging teenagers.”**

**- Lyn Gardner  
on Everything**

# What is the Coronavirus Time Capsule?

**The Coronavirus Time Capsule is a way of recording teenagers' experiences during the global coronavirus pandemic and shutdown.**

It is a cumulative project. Each week individual young people respond to a Topic (things like Home Life, or Education, or Boredom) and make a fifteen-second video. These are then collated and edited together by a group leader (you or a colleague).

The same process happens every week, with the new videos added on to the original ones, so that the Time Capsule gets longer and develops as the shutdown continues and evolves.

Each group will make their own Time Capsule. We're inviting everyone to publish their group's Time Capsule every Friday. If you can't do one every week, that's fine, you could do one every fortnight, or just whenever you can. You can choose to publish your Time Capsule internally (e.g. in a closed Instagram account or privately on YouTube) or externally online.

We think people should listen to teenagers, so the more public videos, the better – but it's up to you and it may depend on the group you are working with.

Each group will make and distribute their own Time Capsule, but eventually we hope to find a way to collect them all together in one place, as a way of marking and remembering this extraordinary period in our shared history.

## **Everything**

The Coronavirus Time Capsule is inspired by a new play that we have been making called Everything. In Everything a group of teenagers create a time capsule live on stage as a response to global uncertainty and climate emergency.

We are still hoping to stage the play, with other youth theatres making their own versions alongside ours, later on in 2020.

## **Social Media**

**We'll be talking about the Coronavirus Time Capsule on Twitter ([@company\\_three](#)) and Instagram ([@companythree](#)). When you are posting your Time Capsules or talking about the project, please tag us and use the project hashtag.**

**[#CoronavirusTimeCapsule](#)**

# The basics

**To make a Coronavirus Time Capsule, you will need:**

- A group of teenagers (any age, any size of group – though if you have a lot of people you might want to make more than one Time Capsule or it'll get very long).
- A way of connecting with your group while you're isolated (we're using phone calls, texts, WhatsApp, Instagram and Zoom).
- A way for your members to send you the videos (email, WhatsApp, Dropbox, etc.).
- Someone who can edit videos at a basic level and upload them to the appropriate place online to be watched and shared amongst the group – and, if you want, a wider audience.

# How it works

**You can run this project however you like, but this is how we're doing it:**

**Every Monday** we will release a topic for the week on our website. This might be a word, an idea, a provocation or a question.

We'll also release some videos made by different artists setting out a technique or challenge that young people might want to use to respond to the topic.

**On Tuesday and Wednesday** each individual makes their fifteen-second video. You might want to support them through online group workshops, messages or phone calls.

**By Thursday** all the videos should be sent to the group leader editing them together. With short videos it should be fine to email these without losing quality or you could send a link to a Dropbox folder. It may also be possible to send them by text message or WhatsApp.

The video will be edited in two forms:

- The video for that week as a standalone video.
- The whole cumulative video for anyone who wants to watch it all from the start.

**Every Friday** we'll release the video online.

We'd love everyone to release their video on a Friday, to amplify what we're doing. If you need to work to a different schedule, that's absolutely fine – go at your own pace and release when you like.

# Resources and support

**Every week, we'll release new resources – videos and activity plans – to support everyone who is making the Coronavirus Time Capsule. We'll also update this Blueprint with the latest activities and ideas and share information through WhatsApp groups and emails. We want this to be a collaborative project that all participating companies can help shape as the shutdown develops.**

See the Support and Guidance section on page 7 for more information.



# Making individual videos

**Every week each person involved in the project should create a fifteen-second piece of video.**

A video could be a performance, a poem, a scene, a piece of movement, a puppet show, an animation, a speech – anything! There's a huge list of potential ideas in the resource section on our website.

**Each video should be:**

- About fifteen seconds long.
- A little piece of art – something considered and crafted.
- Created only out of the things you have around you (i.e. shouldn't have external video edited into it).

**Videos can:**

- Be a result of a collaboration between two or more group members.
- Include another person, so long as it doesn't contravene your safeguarding policy (e.g. a younger sibling shouldn't be filmed without explicit parental permission).
- Be an expressive or unexpected response to the Topic – the more individual, the better. We shouldn't try and make a documentary.

**Videos should not:**

- Be a person talking to the camera spontaneously.
- Use commercial music in case it means the video gets taken down by its host (e.g. YouTube aggressively remove videos that breach copyright).

## Structure

**The Coronavirus Time Capsule has a very simple structure. It starts with an opening monologue, ideally spoken by multiple contributors to the Time Capsule. After that each week's individual videos are edited together. Each week is separated by a simple black and white title card displaying the weekly topic.**

You can choose how you edit your Coronavirus Time Capsule together. We are going to simply place each of the fifteen-second videos next to each other, rather than edit them in a complicated way. We want the young people's work to stand for itself.

While you have total freedom to adapt this project in any way you like, there are two things we'd love everyone to do:

### 1. Opening Scene

We want everyone to make their own version of the same monologue. Simply share out the lines in the speech printed in the Week One blueprint, ask your group to film their line and send it to you. Then edit it all together to make one, continuous monologue.

### 2. Titles

Each week of your Time Capsule should start with a title. It should be around three to five seconds long and silent – a moment of thought and reflection. It should be a white font on a black background and it should say 'Week X' and the Topic title.

**We'll create a jpeg every week that you can edit into your film, or you can make your own. These will be available to download from the resources section of our website.**

# Guidelines and support

**We want to make this a fun, collaborative and iterative project. We're keen to engage everyone involved in working out how it grows and develops and we've put a number of things in place to support your journey with it.**

## Website Resources

On our website, we will share our own Time Capsule and those of other companies, a page of resources - videos, tasks, guidelines - related to that week's topic, an archive of past weeks and a page of useful resources and links that we'll add to as the project progresses.

[www.companythree.co.uk/coronavirus](http://www.companythree.co.uk/coronavirus)

## Mailing List

When you commit to joining the project, please sign up to our Time Capsule mailing list on our website. We won't send many emails (and we'll never share your details with anyone else) but we will update you when new Topics and resources are available online.

## WhatsApp

We've set up a WhatsApp group to share experiences while we're making the Coronavirus Time Capsule, build ideas for future Topics, and share our work. To join it, please email [hello@companythree.co.uk](mailto:hello@companythree.co.uk). Please note that by joining it you will be sharing your phone number with the other people in the group.

## Safeguarding

This is a new way of working for many of us - and safeguarding our young people is very important. In the resources section of our website, there is a template safeguarding policy and guidelines for young people in terms of working online and making the films, as well as other useful resources for signposting and supporting young people.

## Using Personal Material

We imagine this project will involve using personal material a lot. It will be filmed in people's homes and at a time when many might be feeling vulnerable. It is vitally important to be sensitive and careful when using personal or autobiographical material. It is very possible for someone to make their Moments without ever appearing in them.

Encourage your company members not to reveal anything that might make them feel vulnerable, sad or put them at risk. Support them to find the positives in their situation. Always err on the side of caution before including something difficult in the edit.

Parents of under-18s should be aware of what their child is doing in relation to the project and have given their permission. You can find a sample permission form for parents/guardians on the resources section of our website.



# More information

## **Is it okay to film the Time Capsule on phone cameras?**

That's probably all you've got! And yes – phone cameras today are very high quality and will be more than adequate to do the job. It might be worth asking all your members to switch their camera to its highest resolution if possible, but even at lower resolutions you should get what you want.

There are links to useful guides on phone cameras on our website.

## **What if someone feels uncomfortable filming themselves?**

It's totally possible for them to do it without ever appearing on camera. They could speak from behind the camera, make scenes, animations, puppet shows – or even write something for someone else to perform.

## **Can we write our own music?**

Yes! If you have musical people in your group, make the most of them. The more skills brought to bear on the project, the better. There's a link to free music directories on the resources section of our website.

## **Do we have to release our Time Capsule each Friday?**

No – but if we all release them together, we stand a better chance of them being noticed.

## **What if we get bored?**

That's fine – we can advise on how to freshen things up, but if you lose momentum, just stop the project and do something else. You can always come back to it later.

## **What if we get ill?**

The health of you and your group members is the most important thing. So take a break for a week, or have someone else ready to support and step in.

## **What if it gets too hard?**

We don't know what the next few weeks and months hold. If things become too hard, please pause the project. It should be an enjoyable and expressive project. It should never feel like a chore.

## **What if we've got a really good idea for a Topic?**

Tell us! We'll be asking everyone to suggest Topics for everyone else to work on. Or just do your own – you don't have to follow ours.

## **Do we have to pay a licence fee?**

No – the Time Capsule is an open-access, open-source project in which we want as many groups as possible to participate. The only thing that we ask is that you include a note on your website, or any project material saying:

**The Coronavirus Time Capsule Project has been created by Company Three,  
[www.companythree.co.uk/coronavirus](http://www.companythree.co.uk/coronavirus)**

# Working with your group

## Bringing your group together

You can deliver this project in two ways (or do a bit of both):

- Send out the Topic and video tasks to the group individually
- Bring your group together online and have a virtual workshop

We are doing a little bit of both.

We are using Groups and Broadcast Lists on WhatsApp and normal text messages to communicate with our group members. These are useful for sending out the tasks and keeping up with everyone.

We are using Zoom, a video-conferencing tool, to meet online in groups. It is possible to meet large numbers of people on Zoom but it's very hard to have a proper conversation, so we're keeping our online Zoom meetings to short sessions with groups of about ten.

In the resources section of the website, you'll find guidance for running online sessions, games you can play on Zoom, and safeguarding templates to help you set these up. We are learning as we go and will update these as and when we make new discoveries.

A template for an online session might look like this:

### Welcome

Everyone checks in, shares one thing they've been doing that week.

### Warm-up

A physical warm up that everyone copies.

### Games

These could include 'Fetch' - a race to find objects in your home, 'Log roll' - a game where people react physically to your actions, 'Simon says' and Pictionary using the Share Screen Whiteboard feature on Zoom. You can also play word and storytelling games. We'll keep adding to these in the resources section of the website.

### Topic

Share the Topic for the week and ask everyone to say something about it. You may have pre-shared the making task videos, or you could watch them on the Zoom Share Screen feature. Ask for feedback and initial ideas.

### Tasks

Give everyone a few minutes to do a mini-version of one of the tasks. To find an object, write a few lines or think about what they might do. Share back creatively.

### Set deadlines

Remind everyone of the deadline for sending them, how to send their videos and video guidelines (see things to think about on the next page).

### Close

Do a check-out, or final game.

Follow up with support via text and WhatsApp, as much as you are able to.

# Things to think about when making your videos

**Location**

**Lighting**

**Camera angles**

**Framing**

**Zoom**

**Special effects**

**Keep it landscape**

**Use high-quality settings**

**Don't muffle the mic**

**Speak clearly and slowly**

**Make it meaningful**

**Have a relationship with the camera**

**Leave a long pause before you start...  
and after you finish**

# Making video tasks

**Every week, we're inviting some of the brilliant artists we work with to make video tasks for the group. Members can choose to follow one of these tasks, or they can do their own thing.**

Each video task is its own mini-workshop, a set of research and development tasks that will guide each company member towards the creation of their own piece. You can use our video tasks, or you can make your own (please share them if you do).

If you want to make your own video tasks, here are the stages we're using to develop ours. You can choose to shoot your video tasks in one take, or if you have more time and expertise, film them section by section and edit them together.

## **Say hello**

A friendly greeting and an introduction - particularly if you're making the video task for people who don't know you.

## **Topic**

Remind them about the topic for that week, and give an overview of the type of task you're going to set them (e.g. a movement task, a poem, a scene).

## **References**

Mention any references they might like to look at (another video, a specific piece of writing).

## **Warm-up**

Something to stretch their body/brain in a way that will prepare them for the task. This could be writing, physical or imaginative.

## **Research tasks - finding out more about the topic**

Two or three separate tasks that will help them find out more about the topic. Set each task with a time limit and ask them to press pause if necessary to complete it.

## **Development tasks - making art out of the research**

One or two tasks to turn the things we've learnt in the research stage into a piece of art. These should be specific (e.g. use the descriptions of the objects you've found to write six rhyming lines about them). They should also involve you teaching something, or sharing a technique. Again, give a time limit and ask them to pause to complete the task.

## **Example**

Share an example of one you've made yourself, but remember to remind them that theirs can be very different.

## **Final task**

Set the final task - remind them they need to make about fifteen seconds of video. They should find a way to film it that makes it look great on camera. Make some suggestions of things they might want to think about, or layers they might want to add.

## **Sign-off**

Wish them good luck and say goodbye!

# Week by Week

**Each week, we'll add a new topic and set of tasks to this section.**

**If you're starting later, make the opening monologue (The Beginning) and then join in with whichever topic you like. You don't have to work in order.**

**You'll find all the tasks, videos and other resources on our website.**

**[www.companythree.co.uk/coronavirus](http://www.companythree.co.uk/coronavirus)**

# Week 1: The Beginning

**This is the first scene of every Coronavirus Time Capsule. It is a shared monologue, spoken by the company members with each of them taking a line or two each. It introduces the Time Capsule and will be made by every group doing this project.**

Creating this scene together first is a simple way to introduce the project and get people involved. The video task is simply to record themselves speaking their lines, so it's a good way to get used to capturing and sending video.

You can introduce this task to the group via text message or on WhatsApp, or by bringing them all together in a Zoom video session (see our resources section for guides on how to set these up safely).

## **By WhatsApp/Text**

- Set up a Group.
- Allocate the lines in advance.
- Share the whole speech via text or WhatsApp (you can send PDFs by WhatsApp).
- Send individual texts with some instructions (see below) and the lines that person has been allocated.

## **By Zoom**

- Use the 'Share Screen' feature to show everyone the speech.
- Read it all together line by line.
- Allocate the lines live by typing in people's names live into the document.
- Send the final script out by email or individually to people by text.

## **Sample text instructions**

"Your task is to film your line(s) and send the videos back to us. Your lines are written below. Film in landscape mode. Choose a great location and camera angle, get someone to film you if it helps, speak clearly and slowly, look right into the camera and make it meaningful!"

## **Online Resources**

- Speech (see next two pages and downloadable Word version on the Week 1 page).
- Introductory video by Ned Glasier, Artistic Director of Company Three
- Video of C3's version of The Beginning

# Week 1: Speech

Hello.

It's the [add in date that you're starting the Time Capsule]

This is a time capsule.

It is a record of who we are right now.

It is a record of a time when the coronavirus came.

When all the schools shut down.

And everyone got told to stay inside.

We are group of teenagers sitting in our bedrooms.

In our living rooms.

Our kitchens.

Our [add in another place in a home]

Our bathrooms.

Stuck in our homes in a place called [name of place you all live]

In [name of town/borough/area/state]

In [name of country]

In [name of continent]

In the World.

For the next few weeks,

Or months –

– no one knows how long, really –

We're not going anywhere.

So we're going to film ourselves.

Every week.

So that we'll remember what it was like.

What we did...

What we didn't do...

And how we felt.

Because this has never happened before.

And it might never happen again.

This is our Coronavirus Time Capsule.

And it starts...

Now.



## Coming soon!

The Coronavirus Time Capsule is an iterative project that will grow and grow. The next set of week-by-week resources will appear in the next version of this blueprint and on our website.

If you're using this blueprint and you'd like to support it, please consider becoming a **C3 Friend** - a regular supporter of our work.

We're making this all available for free, but can only do this with support from people who believe in what we do.

Find out more at

[www.companythree.co.uk/support](http://www.companythree.co.uk/support)