**Year 11 English Assessment**

**May 2020**

**Time: 45 minutes**

*Answer* ***one*** *of the questions below.*

**Either:**

1) “Times of crisis like the coronavirus bring out both the best and the worst in people.”

Write an article for a newspaper expressing your views on this statement.

Your article may include:

* Examples of ways in which the crisis has brought out the best in people.
* Examples of ways in which the crisis has brought out the worst in people.
* Any further points you wish to make.

*Your response will be marked for accurate and appropriate use of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and grammar.* **45 marks**

**Or:**

2) “Social media has proved to be a huge benefit to society through the times of isolation in which we are living at present.”

You have been asked to deliver a speech to your peers in which you explain your views on this statement.

Your speech may include:

* Examples of ways in which social media has been of benefit to society.
* Examples of problems relating to social media in such a time as this.
* Any further points you wish to make.

*Your response will be marked for accurate and appropriate use of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and grammar.* **45 marks**

**Times of crisis like the coronavirus bring out both the best and the worst in people**.

*It’s weird,* I think to myself, *that after a while living like this becomes the new normal*. I’m sat alone on my living room sofa, scrolling through news, and I’m unsettled by just how *normal* everything has begun to feel. Is this going to be the world I live in for the rest of my life? Is this a wrinkle we’ll smooth out, or the beginning of our downfall? I’m fully aware that I am living through an event that could be written about in a future GCSE history textbook, yet something feels so ordinary. From what I’ve heard, people have always experienced profound emotions during historical experiences: 9/11, wars, natural disasters. Surely a global pandemic that has killed millions and sent multiple countries into lockdown is on the same level? There must be more to this then bingeing Netflix, spending all day completing online school and learning to bake focaccia?

And that was when it hit me. Our world has become so insane, so polarized, so disastrous, that we’ve simply become desensitized. I’ve reached 15 years old, and already I’ve experienced shock, after shock, after shock, so much that after spending months locked inside to try not to catch a deadly virus, the most reflection I’ve done is made a tik tok about wanting a hug to a Fleetwood mac song.

Part of this desensitization I believe stems from the magical world of Mr. Trump and his bemusing (when not terrifying) circus troupe of followers. A lockdown really has brought out the worst in them, because in true Trump supporter fashion, they have ignored it. A rally in Washington state is estimated to have attracted not hundreds, but thousands of protesters, the majority without masks, many claiming the virus is a government hoax and getting their roots done is more important than preventing the deaths of countless Americans. Luckily, karma stepped in and 72 of those protestors were then diagnosed with covid-19. We can only hope they made they managed to make the connection of ‘large gathering’ to ‘catching extremely contagious disease’.

However, in times like this, it is important that we ty and surround ourselves with the positive story. As we begin to adjust to this lockdown, I’ve found that although I’m no longer shocked by the news, I still feel a little sad. Whether that’s due to boredom, missing my friends, or worry, the best way to combat these feelings is to surround yourself with the good acts of regular people that are often overlooked. We can think of Captain Tom Moore, the former British Army Officer that the nation cheered on and supported as he raised money for Covid-19 efforts, and was rewarded with love, spitfire fly overs, the freedom of City of London and given an estimated 140,000 birthday cards on his 100th birthday. The way the population has banded together in support of a good man is astounding, and something to remind us that at heart, the world really is good, we just don’t notice it enough. Even on a small level, people have made the effort to show kindness in any way they can. During the Thursday clap for the NHS, our neighbors were excited to inform the whole street that my mother is an NHS worker signed up to help Covid patients. Since then we have received multiple batches of cupcakes, home-made pretzels (we’re very German), and even a box of chocolates, thank you card and phone number from one of the Vicars we’ve never met, at a local church we’ve never been too.

It’s become difficult to not become depressed by the constant hammering of bad news at our doors. The only thing worse than that, is simply becoming used to it, like I am. Because in a lockdown situation that’s bringing out the very best and the very worst in people, we are only presented the worst. It’s important we begin to search for the best, because if we pay attention, there is so, so much of it. For example, home-made pretzels.