**COVID-19**

Name

Department of English, East Carolina University

ENGL 1100 Foundations of College Writing

Dr. Cheryl Dudasik-Wiggs

Spring 2021

**COVID-19**

The COVID-19 pandemic is an event that hit the world unexpectedly and changed the way our society functions in every detail. Simple things like handshakes, hugs, events/parties, shopping, and eating with friends or family in restaurants stopped and are still not back to normal. These are things that were in a nature that no one thought twice about doing until the pandemic hit, and now we contemplate the risk we take by partaking in these activities. This pandemic hit our nation at a major milestone in my life, graduation from high school and freshman year of college.

March 13th, 2020 was the last day that I attended classes in person at my high school before I graduated and would move on to college. Senior year of high school is supposed to be one of the best years of your life, or at least that is what people say. Events that are supposed to be the highlights of high school such as prom, a normal graduation, senior skip day, sports games, etc. were gone during my senior year because of the pandemic. I did not care about any of those things as much as I did a normal graduation because my entire school career was supposed to lead up to the moment of walking across the stage in front of my classmates and my family getting my diploma. This is the moment that most people look forward to, for me it was important because it was the point to prove myself that I made it and I finished thirteen years of school that would lead up to the next step of my life, and that I would make my biggest support system, my family, proud. My high school was lucky enough to hold a semi-normal graduation on our football field. I walked across the stage to receive my diploma in front of a handful of my classmates, and some of my family.

 Freshman year of college is another big milestone that is exciting, yet stressful that helps prepare students for life on their own and the first steps toward their future. The pandemic affected this part of my life as well because classes were moved online, and I did not get to experience the on-campus life of college. I was able to live on campus in a dorm for almost three weeks during the first semester, but then was sent home. I feel like I missed out on a lot that I would have done if I were living on campus for the full year. College is the place where most people find out who they are, and they find friends that they potentially have for the rest of their life. When I lived on campus, I never made a friend, and I rarely found an opportunity to make any friends on campus. Covid-19 made me, and the rest of my class have an unideal senior year and freshman year of college, but it also gave us the opportunity to overcome challenges that the past generations did not get to face.

 The Covid-19 pandemic has caused many deaths, unemployment, and sadness. Many families have seen the effect firsthand what Covid-19 can have on someone, and one of my families is my own. My family lives in Tennessee and therefore we travel every holiday that we get the chance. In 2020, my mom and I did not travel to Tennessee for Thanksgiving because the pandemic was at a high peak and we did not want to chance getting or spreading the virus throughout our family, but we did travel for Christmas. While we were staying during Christmas break, one of my cousins tested positive for the virus so our family did not gather like we always do. A couple days later my uncle tested positive for Covid-19, and after we got back to North Carolina in January he was taken to the hospital. A few weeks of staying in the hospital, the battle got to be too much, and he passed away from complications of Covid-19. This is never something I thought would happen, I expected him to go into the hospital get a little worse but then get better and I had no doubt in my mind he would be back to his wife, children, and grandbabies. This was not the plan that God had for him and it was to accept this reality. Our family is strong, and we are all working with coming to this new normal, but it does not mean it is easy and this virus has brought heartbreak and sadness onto a lot of families across the world.

 Covid-19 has affected many things in our society, from the way our society functions to the simple gestures of handshaking. Our society has a lot to learn, and we need the patience to work on this new society. This pandemic is one for the books and future generations will read about this time in our lives and question everything we did because of how different it is. There are a few good things that came from this hard time in our lives, for example we have all faced challenges and overcome obstacles that will make us stronger and we have gained traits that will separate us from past and future generations to come.