

Is this camera thing even on? Yes? Okay. Hi, I'm Arika. My mom is making me record this video so that my kids can watch it. I honestly don't see the importance because there's a good chance that my kids won't even live until they're old enough to understand this. Anyways, today is June 19, 2044. I'm sixteen and an only child. I had 3 other brothers, but we lost each of them when they were infants to influenza. There's another measles outbreak going on, so we're quarantined at home. It's not like we leave much anyways because there always seems to be some outbreak or epidemic or pandemic going on. Luckily, we don't get sick much because my mom is really good at keeping us home. I'm lucky that both of my parents have normal jobs where they don't have to leave the house to go to work. Well, I say normal, but that's not what it was like 30 years ago. I should probably explain a little bit more about the history of why my life is like this. Other than the fact that I think the universe hates me, there is pretty much nothing we can do to prevent disease spread. Other than staying home and wearing masks, we don't use vaccines anymore. Oh yeah, so a vaccine is an injection with dead virus cells that normally would train the immune cells to know how to fight alive virus cells if we ever came into contact with them. My parents tell me that vaccines used to be really effective until about 2025, when people started becoming resistant to them. By this, I mean that the immune cells stopped responding to the injections and couldn't learn how to fight the viruses. You've probably heard of antibiotic resistance; it's kind of similar to that. The only difference is that antibiotic resistance is usually caused by the overuse of antibiotics, while vaccine resistance is more of a genetic evolution concept. Supposedly this happened because there are too many variations of each disease. I don't totally understand that part because I don't understand what I learn a ton at online school, but also because the vaccines that older people got a long time ago also aren't working anymore. Side note, I actually can't believe that there used to be an in-person school. My parents have shown me pictures of when they went to school, and I just can't imagine having to leave my room to go to class! Anyways, I understand why that ended, but it's just weird to think about. So back to my theory of vaccines, I think that people are breathing weird air because I don't understand why we couldn't just get a ton of vaccines and hope that one of them works for the current outbreak. It wouldn't hurt to try, but I think that it might be considered unethical. So you

might be wondering what I do for fun or social things. First off, I cannot believe that 20 years ago my parents got all dolled up and went to a big room with probably a thousand other people, without masks, and all breathed each other's air and actually enjoyed it. That's mind-boggling. I like doing things like taking care of my garden and talking after class with my friends online. I don't even think to mention that it's online because that's all I've ever known. Now that I have rambled off my thoughts, my mom made me these prompt cards because I have to fill up 10 minutes of recording time. This card says to talk about your family. I'll start with my parents. My mom was born in 2004, and she was a high school junior and senior during the infamous Coronavirus pandemic during 2020 and 2021. I think she's so careful with her family because she knows how detrimental and terrible an outbreak can be for everyone. My dad was born in 2003 and actually went to high school with my mom. So they have a lot of the same experiences, but they definitely have different views on public health concerns. This is possibly due to the political strife that happened during the first pandemic in their lives. My mom was very cautious and responsible during that pandemic, while my dad wasn't careful at all. From what they've told me, most people were either very careful or not at all. And since then, that hasn't seemed to change. I definitely see that in each outbreak that we have. The politicalness of people's responses to each outbreak has definitely died down, but I can't imagine what they went through. There must have been a total division between the two sides, and when they all had big public gatherings and went to the grocery store, the two sides were probably very visible. Luckily, now it's an 80/20 divide of cautious people versus people who do not have public health concerns. The next card says talk about relevant history. Well, I don't know what's better fitting than to mention the history of global disease. I actually did a project on this for my world pandemics class last week, so I'll tell you about some research I did from that. The first pandemic that we know a lot about was in 1918, about 225 years ago. It was the Spanish Influenza outbreak, and at least 50 million people died. Right now, the human population is almost 9 billion. So 50 million doesn't seem like much, but in 1918, that was almost 3% of the entire world's population. Something else that I researched for my project was how when my parents were born, smallpox and polio had been completely eradicated thanks to vaccines. However, in 2030 smallpox broke out again in New York

City through artificial means. We're still not sure if it was some type of bioweapon, but because the vaccine resistance also started about that same time, smallpox has been a common outbreak. The last card that I want to talk about says, "how are you a good citizen?" I can't talk about this without comparing my life to my parents. I like to think that before we became vaccine resistant, most people were good citizens. Having studied the 2020 Coronavirus pandemic, though, that honestly showed the true colors of most people's genuine compassion toward those around them. Now that we understand so much more about disease spread, most people do what they can to prevent it. Hearing from my parents that people used to purposefully spread disease or knew how to prevent it but didn't is something that I don't see very often. Maybe it was because they took vaccines for granted. I don't think we'll ever know why some people act the way they do, but what I do know is that if I had lived when vaccines worked, I would've never taken mine or anyone else's health for granted, and I would've always gotten vaccinated because I live in a world without vaccines. Okay, mom, I'm finished; how do I turn this off?

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