

Dear Future,

Hello, I begin writing this now at around noon on the 27th of January, a Wednesday near the beginning of the new year, 2021. I am sitting at a desk, in a hard, plastic, yellow chair, among my fellow sixth graders. Today is a cold day in San Francisco, and rain is predicted. Yet rain hasn't come. I am at the very back of my class, with my too-big mask twisted to fit my face. One of my teachers sits at the front of the room, while the other is on a TV, visiting us virtually. I am sitting here now, trying to come up with words that describe the alien situation we're in. Although, thinking about it, it isn't really abnormal anymore. We've gotten used to it, I guess. You could say this is the new normal. So normal, that when I watch television now, I constantly catch myself wondering why none of the characters are wearing masks.

It has been almost a year since quarantine began. In the beginning, none of my fifth grade teachers thought that this would go on for more than a month. In the beginning, my parents were all about taking walks, and being all prepped up for virtual classes in the morning. Yet now it has been almost a year, and even my mom goes to work in her PJs sometimes! My hands are constantly sticky with awful smelling hand sanitizer, and I forgot to brush my teeth this morning, so my mask stinks too. Thinking back to the beginning, I did my virtual school on an iPad, with an attachment keyboard. Now I have a PC to do my work on. There are 100 million cases of the coronavirus, and more than 2 million people dead because of it. It makes me sick to think about it. We are all living in a historical disaster. Although now there is hope. A new vaccine is being distributed, and our new president, Joe Biden, has promised to do all in his power to clean up the mess left behind by our previous president. Hopefully the world will go back to normal at least by the beginning of the new school year, almost six months away. I'm not holding my breath though, I've learned not to since the beginning of this pandemic. Wow, that seems so far away now. My parents have started calling the days before the beginning, "the old days".

I like to call myself fortunate. My parents are able to work from home, while hundreds of thousands of people have lost their jobs. With this quarantine, my parents can't travel, allowing them to spend more time with me and my brothers. Nobody I know has gotten the virus, while over 2 million families have lost loved ones to it. My younger brother has been stuck at home for almost a year, because his school cannot go back to in person. Whereas my school has been going back in person since September. So yes, I like to call myself fortunate. More fortunate than others, and I am extremely grateful for that.

The human race has survived for a very long time, living through disaster after disaster. We will get through this. We have always. We need to work together, no matter race, culture, or political views. It has been beautiful, seeing the world come together, to solve this abstract puzzle, and setting aside old arguments. I am writing this now to the *future*, because I know that there is one.

Stay safe!

Amalia Lopez,  
Wednesday, January 27, 2021.  
San Francisco, California.